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John Wright

THE

WHOLE POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN WRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "THE RETROSPECT," &c. &c.

WITH

A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR,

AND A

SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

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TO

THE KIND PATRONS

OF

UNFORTUNATE GENIUS,

THIS VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

The flattering notices bestowed on former Editions of the Author's works—while they may exonerate him from a charge of ostentation—may not be considered as yielding him grounds for a third claim on the patronage of the public: hence the necessity of a few preliminary explanations respecting the inducements which have led him thus again to intrude himself on its kindness. Praise—though dear to almost every mind—has always been distinguished for its emptiness; something more is required, as Poets—like every one else—are constitutionally unfitted to derive a subsistence from the chameleon's food. That there has been more of reality than poetry in the events of several past years, has been experienced by many—by few has this lamentable fact been so intimately felt as by the author of the present work. Misfortune—aggravated by the errors which it but too often strews in the path of its victims—had "ridden roughshod" over his fondest

hopes and schemes, blighting all, and crushing beneath its load a mind possessing qualities of no ordinary mould: Despair had usurped the seat of hope, and had left only a shadow of that vigour of intellect remaining, which has so brilliantly exhibited itself in the annexed pages, when it was suggested by a few individuals interested in the Poet's welfare, that a re-publication of his Works, with what additions he could make, would furnish the means of extrication from his difficulties. The trial has been made, and on the kindness of a generous and sympathising public rests his hope of success. To his immediate friends he certainly owes a debt of gratitude for the patronage already vouchsafed; and, should Fortune again condescend to smile upon his lot, among her favours—we feel assured—few would afford him higher satisfaction than the recollection of the kindnesses so cheerfully and so disinterestedly bestowed.

SKETCH

OF

THE LIFE OF

JOHN WRIGHT.

SKETCH

OF

THE AUTHOR'S LIFE.

Before entering on a detail of the events that have marked the path through life of the Author of the following Poems, we may be allowed to observe, that the road towards fame, over which the humble votary of the Nine must, in doubt and anxiety, pass, is seldom diversified by that stirring incident, which yields interest to the biographies of those whose genius is of a less elevated, but more active character. Calm, patient, and philosophical self-denial, endured by humble talent, aiming to rear its superstructure of future greatness, constitutes a section of existence devoid of events interesting to the busy world. True genius feeds upon itself. The spark of Nature's fire, fed by the midnight oil, glows faintly, but with a pure ray, for a while, until fanned into a steady flame by the breath of popular applause, or extinguished by the rude gusts of adversity. The former lot of genius is the exception. Illustrious examples are, alas! too rife of the melancholy reverse, where the spirit has sunk in helpless obscurity, to be revived only by the unavailing blaze of posthumous fame. Some, again, but chiefly of a lower standard of talent, have been drawn immaturely from their natural quiet, by the importunities

of friends, or the flattery of the indiscriminating—have lived to lament the ruin of those hopes which alone made exertion pleasant—have sunk under the burden of disappointment which that ruin brought with it—and their names, which might have adorned the roll of the "mind mighty," now tinge the book of oblivion with a shade yet darker than its own.

Feelings, deep-rooted and unfathomable—sensibilities acute, generous, and noble—are the hereditary blessings, (or it may be curses) which operate in chequering the pathway of the Bard. The effect which the collision between these hidden impulses of the soul, and the blasting realities of the world, may have on minds highly tempered by poetry is variable; in many instances it is certain the contact has proved fatal to the too sanguine hopes of those who had erst revelled in the glowing regions of fancy, and judged of the every day realities of life by the rules which an enthusiastic and over generous and sympathetic heart had culled among the paths of poesy. Refined and virtuous feeling is ill able to cope with the cold selfishness which pervades the busy transactions of this world's votaries. There is so little of poetry in the general constitution of man—such a universal lack of that fellow feeling which the Bard expects every being to possess in common with himself—such a mass of immorality, uncharitableness, and chicanery, that the *El Dorado* of his former visions sinks into naught; and, glad to escape from the disappointment which such a discovery engenders, he turns misanthrope, or—what is worse—seeks amid the pleasures of the wassail bowl a solace for the bright hopes lost or faded, which had hitherto urged him on to exertion. Despair seldom lags far behind: it soon finds an opportunity of spreading its dark wing over the wrecked

mind, and degradation seldom fails to find a resting place under its shadow.

The peculiarities and delicacies which belong to the temperament of the sons of genius, render them especially liable to inordinate impressions; while, at the same time, they lack that experience of the world necessary to guard them against even common temptations. Uncontrolled indulgence not unfrequently distinguishes and depreciates the characters of those, who, with a world of their own creating, join issue with the real details of this sublunary sphere. Unfitted to sustain the warfare, a solace for defeat is often sought in the wine-cup—inebriation and its polluting and debasing consequences follow—and the result is unmitigated, irretrievable ruin. Such has been the fate of many a child of song.

The subject of the subjoined notice, like many others of his class, entered on life with but a very imperfect knowledge of its details. Sanguine of a success and a fame greater far than has been *tangibly* accorded him, disappointment has wrought its sad work on his conduct and circumstances. He has greatly erred—not, however, we hope, irredeemably; and if a stern determination from henceforth to eschew these temptations, the past effects of which he has to lament, and a strong resolution to comport himself in such a manner as will yield gratification to himself, and satisfaction to others, can be held as a guarantee of fulfilment, the consummation is not at all unlikely. Experience—with its sombre train of reflection—has directed its *argumentum judicium;* and though old habits—especially when expelled by violence—may return, yet the presumption is strong that his resolutions

may acquire strength in their progress to prevent a relapse.

It may be necessary to premise that the following simple narrative has been drawn up from information furnished by Wright and his relations, and by a few friends who were intimate with him previous to, and at the most interesting period of his career—viz., that in which his "Retrospect," and other Poems were written.

John Wright was born on the 1st September, 1805, at the farm house of Auchincloigh, parish of Sorn, Ayrshire.* His father—James Wright—is a native of Galston parish, but at present, and for several years back, has resided in Ayr, where he gains an honest livelihood by driving coals. He is far advanced in years; and is a remarkably quiet inoffensive person, with a moderate share of intelligence. Wright's mother—whose maiden name was Grizzle Taylor, and who was a native of Mauchline—was the very antipodes of her husband. Lively, bustling, and cheerful, with more of acute penetration than falls to the lot of many of her sex in the same sphere of life, her language was characterised by an

*Auchencloigh is traditionally believed to have been also the birthplace of Alexander Peden, of prophetic memory. The house in which that famed Covenanter first drew breath has been pulled down, and a new steading erected on its site. On one side of the kitchen chimney of the old tenement, there was found, when the house was taken down, an aperture in the wall, the mouth of which had been filled by a square slab of stone. This receptacle had escaped the eyes of those resident in Auchencloigh for upwards of a century and a half, as was supposed. In the recess were found several warlike weapons—including two swords, which since have been called "Peden's swords," with what degree of truth let antiquaries say. Both are in the possession of the writer of this notice.

originality and force of expression, which reminded the listener strongly of her wayward son; whose diction, especially when excited by the social bowl, is, even when applied to trifles, of a peculiarly graphic and comprehensive description. She died of fever about the beginning of December, 1842. The family—of whom John is the fourth—consisted of seven, five sons and two daughters. Two of the former and one of the latter are dead; two brothers are at present with the 91st regiment at the Cape of Good Hope; and the surviving sister is married, and is with her husband in Buenos Ayres.

While yet a mere child, Wright's parents removed from Auchencloigh to the village of Galston, which literally became his native town, and where he spent the few schoolboy days allotted to him—which in reality extended only to a few months. His literary attainments on leaving school embraced no more than a very imperfect knowledge of English reading, while as to writing he knew nothing: indeed, until he had arrived at seventeen years of age, when he contrived to scrawl a few pot-hooks by dint of studying Butterworth's copy lines, he had no notion whatever of caligraphy. A remarkably retentive memory was the only striking quality of mind he exhibited at this early stage of his life. As a proof of his ability, we may mention an anecdote related to us by one who witnessed the incident, which singularly demonstrates the power of memory he possessed. He had for some time attended a Sabbath School established in the village, and had gained the applause of his teacher for the fidelity with which his tasks were committed. On one occasion it had been announced that a school Bible would be given to the pupil in Wright's class who should commit to memory, and repeat the great-

est portion of the 119th Psalm. A fortnight, we believe, was the time allowed, but John had been busy during the first week in assisting his father to supply the villagers with coals, and the Sabbath day found him as diligent in bird-nesting. By the middle of the second week—Poets are ever dilatory—he had not even looked at his task ; however, through the persuasions of his mother, and the hope of the reward acting as an incentive, he commenced to get the Psalm by heart. A few hours in the evenings, were the only time he could devote to his mental labour : still he applied himself perseveringly, and on the afternoon of the Sabbath, John set out for school with a smile of satisfaction on his countenance. One or two of his rivals preceded him in the trial of mental strength, but they broke down ere they had made mere than a third of the way. It came to John's turn : he got up, and commenced with his eyes shut, and in his peculiar drawling tone, finished his task by reciting the Psalm from first to last, and that without even once requiring the aid of a prompter ! The operation—or, as it was considered, the infliction of such a lengthy *yarn*, lasted for upwards of an hour and a half. The unusual length of the task and the sententious accuracy with which John thought proper to embellish its delivery, had their effect on his audience—the greater part —including all the other scholars, having stolen away : in fact, the minister and his elders, (who were the teachers) were all that braved it out, and these by their yawning, could gladly, by appearance, have followed the example of the others. John opened his eyes on victory, and the prize Bible, which he bore home to his father's house in triumph. This fact has given rise to a proverb, current among the good folks of Galston : if they happen to meet

with an individual addicted to prolixity in his discourse, they give vent to their *ennui* by declaring that, "they would rather by far listen to John Wright repeating the 119th Psalm."

The beauty of the scenery around the quiet and retired village of Galston is peculiarly calculated to awaken the sympathies of the poetic mind; these scenes—which are among the most beautiful of which Ayrshire can boast—and to describe which the pens of a Ramsay and a Tannahill have been employed, could not but impress the heart of the embryo poet, with a feeling of their surpassing loveliness. When a mere boy, we find him foregoing the attractions of play, and the company of his merry companions, to wander in solitude, and gaze with certain indefinable sensations on "Loudon's bonny woods and braes," clothed in the foliage of summer; or the unsung, but not less beautiful, banks of the "woody Burnawn," whose fairy haunts had always a peculiar charm in the eyes of the youth, and are well fitted for the nurture and developement of poetic genius.

From infancy until he had reached the twelfth year of his age—saving the gift of memory before alluded to—nothing remarkable exhibited itself in the character of young Wright, if we except a strong penchant for boyish sports, at all of which he was an adept. His appearance was eccentric and ungainly, He even describes himself at this period as "a wild, wayward, reckless, and peculiarly odd boy in appearance and everything else: overmatching all his compeers at the various out-door employments, amusements, and pranks." At ball-playing—a favourite sport among the youth of Galston—he was an acknowledged proficient;

the hidden haunts of the feathered songster seldom escaped his prying eye; bee hunting was also a favourite recreation; and even at the present time, while enjoying his summèr rambles, the wild bees "bizz oot wi' angry fyke," under the plundering hands of the Poet. Little wonder then, that so fond of bee-hunting, one should get under "his bonnet." Possessing a robust constitution, and a lively and active spirit, it was not surprising that he courted these stirring enjoyments so congenial to the taste of youth. Ambition for physical as well as mental superiority—and that too of the most reckless and arbitrary description—influenced his general conduct; and many of his youthful associates recollect well that, if worsted in a game—even by fair play—he invariably knocked his opponent down, or had himself well buffeted for his audacity.

From the time Wright had attained his seventh year up to the period of his being put to a trade, he assisted his father in driving coals for the villagers of Galston, consequently he had few opportunities of indulging in his favourite country rambles. The Sabbath day was generally set apart by him for these excursions; but as this desecration of the holy day did not coincide with the rules of his father's domestic establishment—a proper regard to the fourth commandment being strictly enjoined—his communings with Nature amid those scenes where she shines in her loveliest garb, were few and far between. Moments were, however, snatched when he could gaze with rapture on the beauties of creation—moments sweeter because of their having been stolen; and, when weary and hungry, the evening of the day sacred to rest found him at his father's threshold—reproof, correction, and

advice awaiting him, he cheerfully endured his punishment, listened to his parent's admonitions, but secretly vowed to deserve them more and more. Though a pure love of wandering among those scenes he has celebrated in his poetry, seemed alone to influence such conduct ; and though no motive definitely poetic could be said to prompt this passion ; yet, we cannot but rest the foundation of that vivid natural imagery with which his works are adorned, on the feelings immaturely engendered in his breast during these hours of wayward rambling amid,—

> " The beauteous scenes of nature ; where he found
> In shades and solitude, that true delight,
> Wealth cannot purchase, nor even sceptres yield."

As a further proof of his strong attachment to the scenery of the hills and dales and bubbling brooks—the favoured haunts of the Muse—we may mention that—when all other means failed—his parents—in order to " keep their *wayward* child" at home, were sometimes in the habit of locking past his clothes, so as decency alone might compel him to pay a due respect to the Sabbath day. An open door was, however, with John an excellent equivalent for this deprivation ; and many an extended ramble has he indulged in while almost in a state of nudity.

In one of his predatory excursions into the woods in search of wild fruit, he had the misfortune to get a fall from a very high wild-cherry tree, by which his skull was fractured. He was carried home, and for a time his life was despaired of. He, however, soon recovered, and set about his wonted pursuits. Shortly after the occurrence of this accident, he happened to engage in a quarrel with a playmate—John, as usual, being the aggressor. His opponent was forced to beat a retreat, but rallied, and lifting a great stone, hurled it at Wright's head, which it

struck, and almost killed him. He lay for two days insensible, and all hopes of his recovery had fled; when, strange to say, he started to his feet on the third day, and the following Sabbath found him at his old occupation of wandering. From this period a visible change took place in his deportment: his roystering habits gave place to a sort of nervous melancholy, which, with an impaired equanimity of temper, have distinguished his character ever since: this change of disposition he himself attributes to the effects of the accidents narrated above.

At thirteen the Poet was apprenticed to the weaving trade, to a Mr George Brown, in Galston, who, according to Wright's account of him, was a man of an excellent heart and sound understanding, and to whose kindness he was greatly indebted during his pursuit of knowledge. His memory yet lives in the minds of his contemporaries, associated with all those virtues that blend to form the upright man. Every information he could afford was freely granted to the Poet, who improved with wonderful rapidity under his tuition, and he never mentions his benefactor's name without expressing the warmest gratitude for his kindness and attention. It was customary with Mr Brown to have weekly meetings in his house, of such among his friends as were fond of literary pursuits, and among whom were several very intelligent men. To these *converzationes* Wright had free access, as also to his master's library, which was extensive and well selected, and in a couple of years—as he himself states—"he had got so much of general information that he determined to set up thinking for himself." Considering that he was yet comparatively a youth, and that extreme bashfulness had taken the place of his former

resolute disposition, this determination may appear to have been premature: but it must also be kept in mind that his powers of memory were still most extensive, and his judgment generally acute; besides, by the conversation of a few congenial spirits among his acquaintances, he received much information and expansion of mind, independent of the sources mentioned above. Books of all descriptions he devoured with avidity, but poetry had always for him a peculiar charm. With this love of reading came the "sin of rhyme"—they were begotten simultaneously—they were twin born.

It has often been proven that first love has been the primary incentive towards the developement of the latent energies of the mind, producing that true poetry of the soul, breathing all that is virtuous, pure, and sincere. Though he had jingled puerile rhymes almost from infancy, these had been unmixed with feeling; his first love called forth his heart in its earliest song. The object of the Poet's youthful affection was a worthy girl of modest deportment, with a happy though subdued wit, and an easy sprightliness, combined with imitative talent of no ordinary quality. Though not by any means attractive in the eyes of the fairer part of creation—from his morose, or rather misanthropical, habits, more than from his personal appearance—John yet became the accepted of the lively girl, and with all the enthusiasm of inexperience, they plighted their vows ere either had reached their sixteenth year. Their love was truly reciprocal, and the Poet sang his hopes and joys unalloyed by those tantalizing fears which generally mark the course of the tender passion. Many a soul breathing strain has his memory contained—for he could not write at this period—the

greater part of which have faded with those feelings first love awoke in his mind. As he attached himself to the Nine, the " luve o' life's young day" gradually wore off, and his inamorata, whether jealous of the power which the daughters of Jupiter and Nnemosyne had usurped over the heart of her betrothed, or from some other cause unknown, we are not enabled to say : yet certain it is the correspondence broke off abruptly, and at a period when the whisperings of ambition, and the desire of putting forth to the world his claims as a poet, had begun to engross his almost every thought. A suitor less apathetic soon presented himself, and his " flame" shortly afterwards married. The grave has now closed over her—" the perfection of whose liveliness and beauty" —to use his own words—" infused poesy and passion into his heart, and scattered bloom and fertility over the parched and barren desert of his existence." An effusion (valuable only as being the first effort of the untaught muse) inspired by those feelings which first love calls into existence, will be found in this volume.

Plying the shuttle for fifteen hours per day cannot be considered as an effectual spur to a poetic mind : yet, notwithstanding this labour, Wright found opportunity to string his thoughts together in rhyme ; or, in the company of a few amiable and intelligent associates, whose kindred feelings recommended them, to wander among their favourite haunts on the delightful banks of the Irvine, or the fairy margin of the secluded Burnawn, making a paradise of the present, while their thoughts of the future were visions of unclouded pleasure. Poetry was a passion with the more select of his companions, but to him it was all in all of his existence—his day-dream and

his night reverie. He had already commenced a Tragedy, which he entitled " Mahomet ; or the Hegira", at which he wrought with unceasing study until it had extended to upwards of 1500 lines, all of which he retained on his memory, which he was necessitated to do owing to his inability to write it down. On repeating it to his friends they passed sentence of condemnation upon it owing to its almost total want of *stage effect*—a circumstance solely to be attributed to the fact that the author had never, at that time, seen a dramatic representation. He continued, however, to add to it, feeling persuaded that injustice had been done to it by its critics ; but through the acute perception and gentle persuasion of a young girl—a mere child—and her repeated assertions that it was " immeasurably dull", the author was at last forced reluctantly to see this defect.

Whether proceeding from intense application, or the hitherto dormant effects of the accidents already described; or from the disappointment arising from the failure of his first effort, we are unable to demonstrate, but a deep melancholy took possession of, and settled down on his mind at this period. Gloomy and troubled thoughts—a general depression of spirit—confusion of ideas—a nervous anxiety and proneness to irritation—accompanied by an overpowering and indefinable fear, gradually usurped his mind, and threatened to undo his purposes for ever. By the advice of his friends, he was induced to suspend his poetic labours, and seek in recreation the means of bracing his shattered nerves, when he might again set himself to his mental toils with renewed energy. This monomania took possession of his mind at the commencement of a dull winter ; but, by dint of constant and severe exercise in

the fields, and a course of judicious medical treatment, the following Spring found him in full possession of his mental faculties.* It may be here stated that he managed during this unhappy period to instruct himself in writing by the means previously mentioned. So soon as his mind had resumed a healthy tone, he addressed himself to his literary labours with an application that even exceeded in intensity that of the foregoing summer. His first object was to re-model his Tragedy of "Mahomet," making such alterations as would produce the required stage effect; but, after labouring assiduously for several months, he was at last forced to abandon the subject as one ill adapted for the purpose intended. The melancholy that had before seized him, returned at intervals. For a few years afterwards he but occasionally "perpetrated poetry," but applied himself with divided diligence to his loom—the study of nature—and the general improvement of his mind.

The RETROSPECT was announced in the year 1824. At the outset, the Poet formed a resolution that he should compose not less than two stanzas daily, which, under all circumstances he continued to do until it was nearly finished. The whole of the first Canto he retained on his memory until an opportunity should occur when he might get it committed to paper. The workshop was his study, and the loom his desk. His poetical exertions were greatly marred by the persuasions of some individuals who were nevertheless excellent friends—but who decried every thing in the shape of poetry, from a mistaken notion of

*While thus in search of health, the Poet says he, in the winter months, indulged in the novel pastime of bathing in a favourite pool in Burnawn, and thinks it aided his recovery.

its inutility. Their representations, however, only served to damp his ardour for a time, and he continued to add to the poem until it had been nearly finished, his natural intelligence always pointing to such exertion as the way to popularity—now his exclusive ambition. A period of four years was suffered to elapse, during which the Poet seems to have given his Muse a jubilee. At the end of that time, a few friends, whose enlarged understandings, extensive information, and critical acumen, rendered them pretty good judges of poetical merit, had the manuscript of the "Retrospect" submitted to their correction. They read, reviewed, censured, and praised as they saw fit—suggested a few improvements, of which the author took advantage—and finally recommended him to publish; but, in the first place, they thought it advisable that he should carry the work to Edinburgh, and make an effort to obtain an opinion as to its merits from some of the *literati* there.

Wright instantly set about the preparations for carrying this suggestion of his friends into effect; and, having procured some writing materials, he went home to his father's house, where he carefully transcribed the "Retrospect," and a few smaller pieces, which occupied him about a fortnight. He then left Galston with his manuscript in his breast, and with only one halfpenny in his pocket. He had been disappointed of some money owing him, but having fixed on a time to begin his adventure, he was not to be diverted from his purpose; he had put his hand to the plough, and scorned to turn back.

On his arrival at Glasgow he was introduced to Mr John Struthers, the author of "The Poor Man's Sabbath," and the late Dugald Moore, Esq., author of "The

African," &c., both of whom received him in a kindly manner, and treated him with all the warmth of poetic friendship. They perused his manuscript, and approved of his intention to seek a patron in Edinburgh. They also gave him some money, and he set out for Auld Reekie with a light heart, and the most sanguine hopes of future fame. He had taken his passage in one of the canal boats; and among the passengers was a character belonging to L——, a messenger-at-arms—who, seeing something peculiar in Wright's appearance, hobbled (for he had a wooden leg) up to the Poet, and entered into conversation with him. John explained his business, and the views he entertained of ultimate success, should he only be fortunate enough to obtain an audience of some of the leviathans in the literary world, who were domiciled in Modern Athens. His new acquaintance was graciously pleased to promise the Poet that he would use the utmost exertion to procure him an audience of his *friend* Walter Scott, his *bosom crony* Professor Wilson, and his talented *club companion* Henry Glassford Bell; and, from the intimacy existing between him and those exalted personages, there was no doubt whatever but Wright's views as to an audience, and more, would be fully borne out. The worthy also condescended to call in bottle after bottle of porter, which he graciously allowed Wright to pay, until the Poet's finances had dwindled down to sixpence; and, to sum up the aggregate of his many kindnesses and condescensions, he bolted the moment the boat arrived, leaving John to find access to his *dear friends* in whatever manner he chose. The man of summonses, poindings, hornings, &c. &c., having thus given the Poet his first lesson in the ways of the world, by abruptly

leaving him with no other companion than that which too often constitutes "the badge of all his tribe,"—viz., an empty purse. John's natural timidity and heartless situation had nigh overcome him, and many a time and oft he glanced towards the canal with the thought that in its muddy waters might be found a relief from the pains of this "his first real grief,"—as he himself expresses it. However, after battling with his mental afflictions, the love of life and fame gained the victory over his suicidal notions, and he determined on the instant to call on that patron of merit and miracle of genius, Sir Walter Scott; and thus resolved, he enquired his way, and found himself at the domicile of the mighty Wizard. Much to the chagrin of our Poet, Sir Walter had left town the preceding day for Abbotsford. Wright then set out with the intention of visiting Sir Walter at his favourite villa, and had reached the extreme boundary of the city of Edinburgh, when fatigue, want of sleep, and the cheerless prospect of a pennyless journey of sixty miles, overpowered his resolution, and his heart gave way under the burden of his affliction. He hesitated—stood still—then threw himself down on the ground—drew his manuscript forth from his bosom—and cast it from him in despair, like Hagar when she abandoned her child in the wilderness! After indulging in a burst of disappointed feeling, he determined to return home, and resign his ambitious views for ever. While in this mood he bethought him of a friend who lived at Leith, and thither he went at early dawn, and was well received, and remained until he had fully recruited his bodily fatigues, when the desire of popularity returned with tenfold force. Another kind townsman, to whom Wright was known, also enacted the part of the good

Samaritan towards him; and, among other kindnesses, introduced him to the notice of several students belonging to the Edinburgh University—among the rest a Mr David Hastings, a native of Dumfriesshire—who particularly at this, besides subsequent periods, interested himself in Wright's behalf, and perseveringly carried him through many formidable difficulties, especially in the matter of preparing his work for the press. It was through this gentleman's instrumentality that he was ultimately introduced to the favour of Professor Wilson, Dr M'Crie, H. G. Bell, Esq., of the *Literary Journal*, and other distinguished men of letters, to whose good opinion our Poet was mainly indebted for the success that followed the issue of his first edition. Mr Hastings—who was well known as an excellent general scholar, and who possessed genuine poetical talent—died a few years ago of small-pox in Watson's Hospital, Edinburgh, where he held an official situation. He was respected for his abilities, beloved on account of his warm hearted kindly manner, and left many friends to mourn over his loss, and none more sincerely than he who forms the subject of this sketch.

Through the intercession of Mr Hastings and his friends, Professor Wilson condescended to peruse, and give his opinion regarding Wright's poem. For this purpose the MS. was delivered to him, and after a few days Wright was sent for, in order to have an interview with "Christopher," who spoke flatteringly of the merits of the production, and gave the author, at his departure, the following testimonial :—

"Professor Wilson has read with much pleasure Mr Wright's M.S. volume of Poems. They display great feeling and fancy, and are assuredly most creditable to the head and heart of the Author. Should Mr Wright think of

publishing by subscription, Professor Wilson begs that his name may be put down for eight copies ; and, in the meantime, wishes him to be assured of his esteem."

At his request another visit was paid to the illustrious author of "the Isle of Palms," who gave our Poet a most cordial reception. He entered freely into conversation regarding Poetry and Poets,—Cowper, Byron, Wordsworth, Campbell, and Burns—spoke of the general literature of the day, but never once alluded to his own productions. The Professor proffered his patronage in various ways, and strongly urged Wright to set about the publication of his works by subscription, and he would do all in his power to further the sale of the impression—a promise, it is needless to say, he fulfilled to the letter. Before taking leave, Wright was furnished with several recommendatory letters to gentlemen in the West Country, expressing in high terms the Professor's sense of the talent which dictated the "Retrospect," and those documents tended greatly to promote the sale of the work. H. G. Bell, Esq., also, with a kindness characteristic of that gentleman's nature, did much to forward Wright's interest. He corrected several errors in the M.S. ; paid its author the subjoined compliment in the *Literary Journal*, and behaved towards him in a manner which has earned his lasting gratitude :—

"Gentle feeling and acute sensibility to all the charms of nature, are the characteristics of Mr Wright's Poetry."

After a stay of about three months in Edinburgh, during which period Wright had seen a good deal of life in circles to which he had not before or since that time a means of access—had benefited much by the advice and direction of his patrons there—and had procured nearly

one thousand subscribers for his work—he set out for the West Country full of hope, and sanguine of a success far beyond probability. Estimates were taken in, and the first edition of his Poems was published by Messrs. Curl and Bell, Glasgow. The impression sold rapidly, a circumstance mainly attributable to the flattering notices bestowed on the work by the Periodical and Newspaper Press, Metropolitan and Provincial. It may not be out of place here to give a few of these :—

" Volumes of better poetry have lately been written by persons more illiterate than any of Southey's uneducated Poets. In particular we allude to John Wright, who though illiterate in the largest sense, and confined to the most severe labour in a cotton factory,* somewhere in Ayrshire, has embodied in his works a system of rural images, and a train of moral reflections, that would have done honour to more distinguished names."—*London Quarterly Review.*

" We read on with delight; we are astonished at the originality and power of the Author ; we pause over the achievements of his unassisted mind, and wonder, with all the difficulties he has struggled with, that he has produced so much."—*London Monthly Review.*

The following extract is from a critique on Wright's poems, which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* :—

" Many of the poems of John Wright, an industrious weaver somewhere in Ayrshire, are beautiful, and have received the praise of Sir Walter Scott himself; who, though kind to all aspirants, praised none to whom nature had not imparted some portion of creative genius. One of John's pieces we have committed to memory, or rather, without trying to do so, got by heart; and as it seems to us very mild and touching, here it is." (The Poem alluded to, entitled " The Wrecked Mariner," will be seen in this volume..

* This is a mistake—Wright never was employed in a cotton factory.

The Poet, after the sale of his first edition, remained for some months in his native village; but, instead of being *lionized*, as his anticipations had led him to expect, he found in place a verification of the proverb that a prophet has no honour in his own country; and, being tired of an inactive life, he resolved to seek a change of scene as a cure for that bilious feeling which prompted him to write the "Street Remarkers." With this view he set out for Cambuslang, near Glasgow, a place where he was not known, and having gone thither he commenced to work at his trade of weaving. Very shortly after settling there, he married Margaret Chalmers, a young woman of excellent character, who had received a more than ordinarily liberal education under the care of her grandfather, the teacher of the parish school. Having naturally a turn for literary pursuits, she and John lived very happily together, their tempers and dispositions according well. After the birth of their first child, which was still born, Mrs Wright experienced an attack of bad health. The double advantage of making a little money, and of renovating Mrs Wright's health by travel, induced our poet to think of publishing a second time, and he therefore entered into a contract with Messrs Bell and Bain in Glasgow for a thousand copies. The Poet, accompanied by his wife, then set out for Greenock, where he had good success, having sold as many copies there, and in Port-Glasgow, as defrayed the expenses of printing the edition. He also found a number of subscribers in Dumbarton and Stirling shires; and many copies were sold in Glasgow and its neighbourhood. Every encouragement that could be given the Poet in his exertions was freely vouchsafed by many kind individuals, among whom were the

Rev. Mr. Anderson of Dumbarton—a gifted votary of the Muses—Capt. Mackieson, now of the Dundee Police—Mr Tennant, author of "Anster Fair,"—and several others whose genius has not slumbered, although their efforts have not been made public. Wright speaks of the goodness of Tennant with gratitude. While at Dollar, many long and earnest conversations took place between them on the merits of the most popular poets. Tennant's opinions were tinctured with a charitable feeling which shielded the blemishes attributable to character or style. Byron's faults were glozed over by the many beauties of his poetry—Burns's errors were sheltered under the splendour and versatility of his talents—to all the sons of the Muse he was a friend, and advocated even their failings with a zeal and earnestness that would almost make them "lean to virtue's side." He was of an unpretending character, and without even a shadow of that egotism, which is chargeable on many, who, with slighter claims to genius, have more assurance. When he died, Wright—with a lively sense of his worth—composed the epitaph which will be found in the body of this volume. On leaving Dollar our author made a tour through the "kingdom of Fife," thence by the east coast into Dumfries-shire and by Galloway to Ayrshire. He was greatly indebted to the kindness of John M'Diarmid, Esq., Editor of the *Dumfries Courier*, for the patronage he received in that quarter, and, as a mark of gratitude, dedicated his miscellaneous pieces to that gentleman. The wandering sort of life which he had led for a season, while it advanced his interest in one respect, resulted in what may be justly termed the destruction of his health—mental and physical. His name had been wafted abroad on the pinions

of adulation, and in almost every town or village he visited during his peregrinations, he found some individual to take him by the hand and afford him that attention which genius always commands when inclination leads it to seek praise. The innate bashfulness of John's nature was often forced aside by the influence of the intoxicating bowl, and succeeding indulgences soon conspired to beget a habit that has clung to him with a pertinacity which—it is to be feared—will never be effectually removed. Had prosperity always lingered around his footsteps, it might have been otherwise; but, alas, we regret to say that his has become a wreck among the many noble minds that have been stranded on the rocks of intemperance. We would fain have denied ourselves the task of recording this blight among the flowers which his fancy has called into existence; truth, however, directs the pen, while friendship mourns over the page.

After resting three months from the toils of his journey, which had brought on a disease in his ankle joints, and had kept him rather unwillingly at home in Ayr, he set off for Cambuslang, and recommenced his old trade of weaving. Some exertion was by this time necessary, as the profits of his second edition had been spent. Mrs Wright's health had been completely re-established, and both set to their domestic duties with a will that promised future prosperity. But the depression which had long been felt in the weaving trade had—shortly after the Poet settled at his loom—arrived at a climax; and, as its effects came to press heavily on his endeavours, he lost heart, and allowed his pent-up inclinations to take sway over his reason. His literary *friends* plied him with his favourite beverage—domestic squabbles usurped the place

of peace; and John's habits becoming daily confirmed in intemperance and its evils, a separation ensued. Mrs Wright and her two boys continue still to reside at Cambuslang, and the Poet's conduct, until lately, has been such as to hold out few hopes of a reunion. His view in publishing the present volume is to provide the means for effecting this purpose—an end to which his wishes have been directed for some time past.

From the period of his separation from his wife and family, up to the present moment, to describe his life would be a hopeless task, and the picture would not tend to advance the cause of morality, or shew human nature in any thing but its most lamentable aspect. Homeless, comfortless, but not aimless, on his success in the present undertaking depends, in a great measure, the happiness he has anticipated to experience in future. To the friends of Genius in Misfortune he has made a first appeal; but, should he fail, and what remains of a spirit within him be crushed amid its last and most lively hopes, those who now befriend him will at least have the happy reflection of having exerted themselves to the utmost to save the wreck of a noble mind from being engulphed in poverty and despair.

In conclusion, it may be expected that we should say something of the character of Wright's works, and the claims which may be advanced in his behalf on the score of genius. These have already been shewn to be of a very superior character; and we would point to the testimonies of a Scott, a Wilson, and a Bell in proof of this fact, rather than give a preference to our own opinion, which—favourable as it might be—would not serve in the smallest degree to illustrate the truth of theirs.

THE RETROSPECT,

OR

YOUTHFUL SCENES.

IN TWO CANTOS.

THE RETROSPECT.

CANTO I.

I.

Life, ere by Reason swayed, its joys I sing,—
A theme still searched and sung, and still inviting;
Now that the Muse again is on the wing,
After a long blank pause, all undelighting—
A sterile wreck, Fame, Hope, Ambition, blighting;
By passion brought, that brought despondence dire,
The darkened heart with fancied ills affrighting;—
Poetic vision quelled, and quenched its fire,—
So now with trembling hand I touch life's early lyre.

II.

Oh! for the winning sorcery of those
When in their bright career they first did start,
At once to Fame's proud pinnacle who rose,
And deified themselves in every heart!
To brook no more oblivion's bitter smart,
Have I not warred with joy, or baffled pain?
And still all efforts fail the gloom to part,
And show a path that so I may attain
Hope's promised eminence, again and still again.

III.

Yet, but its due bewitching Glory give,
As soon as found 'tis stale, the dear-bought boon:
The Flower we plant and rear, and o'er it live—
And yet 'tis left to wither when full blown—
Pressed immature, matured, its perfume gone;
Allow we relish what it may bestow,
'Tis all a hazard, and can ne'er atone
For those bereavements—all we must forego,
Ere scaled the rising height, we long to reach below.

IV.

Thus will I tune my unambitious song
To Childhood, cherished in the rural shade;
Nor form again a wish, nor ever long
The dizzying height to reach, nor fawn for aid.
The flowers that I will gather soon may fade;
The gems that glitter in their native dell
May lose their lustre, to the world displayed;
Yet will not I 'gainst frowning fate rebel;
Sharp, festering, sad regrets shall ne'er be mine to quell.

V.

From every stage of life we love to look
Through the dim backward distance, to the day
Ere time had planted, and the heart did brook,
The ills that bear o'er life their bitter sway;
When through the blissful scenes we used to stray
Of Fairyland unfabled, and full slow
Approach where Hope first led our steps away
To richer realms, where brighter pleasures flow;—
Bewitched the tale to trust, how wrong were we to go!

VI.

Much from remembrance falls, and fades away,
Like leaves blown from the bough when winds beat keen;
But youth's endearments, gemmed in heavenly ray,
Still bloom and brighten there, as evergreen
That lovelier still appears, more verdant seen,
In nature's wreck, in winter's sunless gloom:
We may not, cannot be as we have been,
Yet still in thought sweet Boyhood we resume,
Press the light foot-prints o'er, and mitigate our doom.

VII.

In youth's bright summer, when I skimmed along
On rapture's rolling tide, 'twas sweet to try,
In buoyancy of soul, to weave sweet song,
While searching nature with unsullied eye:—
The aggregated charms of earth and sky,—
The blight of winter, and the bloom of spring,—
The green and golden mantle and soft sigh
Of gentle autumn,—all alike did bring
Fresh beauty to the mind on Adoration's wing.

VIII.

Then sweet to wander through the leafless grove,
While yet Spring's infant anthems rang, to wake
Earth into life—with winter now she strove,
Now would the hue of summer beauty take,
Now autumn-drapery, and then all forsake,
To shine herself alone; nor loved the less;
And as we gazed, above the late fallen flake,
Seemed germ of spring, that sunbeam loved to kiss—
Chasing the clouds away, to hasten vernal bliss.

IX.

And sweet to roam o'er yet snow-chequered scene
Along the hilly rise, and there behold
Earth—one vast gem of sparkling white and green;
And down the steeps streams dashing bright and bold,
Noisy, innumerous—half from winter hold
Their short duration, yet impetuous, proud,
As through all lands, all ages they had rolled:—
Ephemeral offspring of the fleeting cloud,
Foam on! the upstart streams of life yet rage more loud.

X.

And sweet to wander forth at glimmering dawn
Ere, echoing, heard brown labour's pond'rous tread,—
Or flock or herd, uncouched, spread o'er the lawn:
Where'er ye turn, by love the soul is led;
The tuneful lark has left her dewy bed—
Seems hung from heaven; enchanting music floats
Along the vale from bushes high o'erhead;
Whilst the grey mock-bird[1] trills its varying notes
As 'twere a dulcet choir from thousand different throats.

XI.

The yellow-hammer mounts the birch tree hoar,
With melancholy dead-deploring wail;
And now, shrill harping, wren and red-breast pour
Their mingling melody adown the vale;
And thrush, with song voluptuous, loads the gale;
Impatient all of leaflets' long delay,
Slow shooting verdure, and—that still assail—
Slight frosts, and blighting winds, that build may they
In open field secure, tree, hedge, or hedge-side gray.

XII.

Thou comest, Spring! like an o'er-fondled child,
That frets, and brawls, and weeps, and knows not why;
Straight smil'st, with cheek all beauty, dimpling mild;
And now, to tempt pursuit, afar dost fly;
And in thy absence with each other vie
To seize thy sceptre, frost, snow, wind, and rain;
And opening flowerets drop their heads to die:—
With wreath of beams and joyous flowers, again
Thou com'st, to rout abashed stern Winter's hostile train.

XIII.

Thou com'st like maiden in her earliest bloom,
That young hearts homage with impassioned glow;
Thou com'st like day-star diving through the gloom,
The hope of morn on mortals to bestow;
Thou com'st like manhood struggling with the throe
Of seeming dissolution; like a dream
That fills the fluttering soul with an o'erflow
Of every bliss, delights that brightest seem,
And then in heart-ache ends at morning's dawning gleam.

XIV.

How rich, how lovely, in thy flowery prime,
Fair Spring! oh, would this were thy radiant home!
Too fleet thy sojourn in our pallid clime,
Sweet wanderer! when thou leav'st thy native dome,
For ever on the wing like warning Gnome;[2]
In Paynim solitudes why love to smile,
Or where barbaric hordes embruted roam,
Unprized, with all thy peerless charms—the while
Thou leav'st to storms a prey this our else favoured isle?

XV.

Thou op'st a storehouse for all hues of men :
To hardihood, thou, blustering from the north,
Roll'st dark ; hast sighs for those that would complain;
Sharp winds, to clear the head of wit and worth ;
And melody, for those that follow mirth ;
Clouds for the gloomy ; tears for those that weep ;
Flowers, blighted in the bud, for those that birth
Untimely sorrow o'er ; and skies, where sweep
Fleets of a thousand sail, for him that ploughs the deep.

XVI.

As one awaked from sweet reviving sleep,
O'er renovated nature, looks abroad,—
Himself transformed, he drinks, and drinks more deep
Of gladness, gathered round his bless'd abode,
That, for a space, withholds the accustomed load
Of ills indigenous—he wondering feels
Youth's fairy-ground beneath him, long untrod :
Much more, sweet Spring ! thy loved approach reveals
Of all that glads the heart—which winter's breath conceals.

XVII.

Of all the seasons, Summer ! thee I hail !
Congenial most with manhood, youth, and age ;
When fragrant verdure crowns the sheltered vale,
And hill, and wood, and stream, so strong engage ;
Youth bursts the lonely prison, that the rage
Of wintry, vernal storms immured so long,
To greet thee, Summer, in thy fairest stage,
Amid the green exuberance, and the throng
Of birds, from every bough, that wake symphonious song.

XVIII.

And many a nameless pleasure winged those hours
Of halcyon beauty,—sweet the search to find
Gay coronal of convoluted flowers,
The brow of vestal innocence to bind;
Untouched and pure, and like the cultured mind
That opes not all its treasures at first view;
As sparkling gems, by silvery bar confined,—
Without attractive—more to wander through
The labyrinth of folds, so fair that hidden grew.

XIX.

The sight, how charming! whatsoe'er it be,
Though not in mould of song or beauty cast,
That in our early days we used to see,—
Straightforth before us rolls the pleasing past,
And life's first lovely visions gild our last;
Thus would I spurn imperial couch—reclined
On trunk of long fall'n tree, decaying fast,
That moss enwraps, and weeds and wild-flowers bind,
And ivy shoots, that knit the sear and sapless rind.

XX.

The sight enchanting! wheresoe'er beheld,
(Attractive most beside our early home,)
Of hoary ruin, Time hath long upheld
In beauty; now, as with the weight o'ercome,
Has left to perish; ever would we roam
Its misty annals o'er, and fancy new,
And still of its young glories—hence its gloom
Of age endears, that, otherwise to view,
Were oft as desert drear we think to traverse through.

XXI.

To Lockhart's Tower[3] now flocked we forth—the prey,
The wreck of ages, and the pride of song;
Where many a gambol circled round the gray,
Dark, feudal vestige, and its dells among;
But o'er all sports athletic, nimble, strong,
Was hand-ball pastime; young, mid-aged, and old,
As equals mingled, after practice long;
And scarce a neighbouring village was so bold
As struggle with our own, the sovereignty to hold.[4]

XXII.

Now sloe and sounding nut, raspberry wild,
Allure our footsteps to the hazelly height;
Haw, juniper, and bramble-berry mild,
And clustering fruit of mountain ash invite;
And hip mellifluous, after evening's blight
Of hoar-frost bland;—and ever as we went,
By the dark stream's worn eddy, foaming white;
Our bathing place of pastime—we gave vent
To joys aquatic—life with pleasure truly blent.

XXIII.

Oh! there, around the old gray ash that hangs
O'er the stream's rapid whirl—where, 'tis said,
Wrung by despairing love's transfixing fangs,
To its far top light scaled the maniac maid,[5]
And thence with ringlet band, all undismayed,
Herself suspending, swung; the sapless bough
Hurled with her headlong down the dark cascade;
Whence her wild scream of agonizing woe
Each night, as legends tell, comes bubbling from below!

XXIV.

In this lone scene of beauty, our chief joy—
Surviving youth itself and all its charms—
Was with the wilding Bee, but not to cloy,
From its sweet stores, the heart, nor spread alarms,
Assailing ruthlessly with murderous arms:
These from the soft heath, those from flow'ry sward
Transplanted we, fond from autumnal storms,
To rush-wove glass-roofed bower,—our rich reward,
Their movements to behold, their labours not retard.

XXV.

We roamed the wild wood; searched the sunny dell;
Explored the foggy hedge-side round and round;
Scaled the acclivious banks of mountain rill;
Paced every nook of land where flowers abound—
Where the dark freckled wild bee still was found:
And leaped the lightened heart, crowned was desire
With full fruition, when they sought the ground:
To learn their strength, stamped we the turf on fire—
All instantly rushed forth with buzzing vengeful ire.

XXVI.

When woods would shower their foliage, and the wave
Roll dark with summer's beauty, forth we'd stray,
O'er rustling ruin, to some lonely cave,
And pass, with pleasing themes, the night away;
Or tracing, by the moon's romantic ray,
The undiscovered charms of haunted scene,
Where down the woodland's gray declivity
Hurled the clear gliding brook, that elves did screen
With curving underwood, to lave their limbs unseen.

XXVII.

For ever lovely, thy deep thoughtful hue,
Soft Autumn eve! these clouds thy spirit fair,
Like necromantic chariots posting through
The blue expanse, in life and beauty; there
Serpents seem billowing forth with speckled glare;—
Here, a huge mammoth rests upon the snow
Above, and belches down abrupt through air,
A burning fire-flood to the plain below,
And o'er an azure deep, where little skiffs float slow.

XXVIII.

Here towers a golden statue, borne in air
By pebbly rock, and poised by gentlest wind;
There witch-forms scamper 'mongst the moonbeams fair,
Or sail along on hills, their charms unbind,
As they withdraw, relaxing, like the hind,
In overseer's wished absence, or removed,
An army, from its leader: now reclined
On the horizon hills;—and now, unmoved,
Unnerved, the cold, pale moon, less lovely, yet beloved.

XXIX.

As lovers lingering in each other's sight,
The more apart, more fixed the fettered eye;
As Bard the eagle in its upward flight
Surveys, through air, cleft clouds, and yielding sky;
As Mariner tossed on ocean, surging high,
His bark o'erset, hails land, afar unfurled:
Thus greet we these fair forms, and still descry
Enchantment there—live emblem of the world!
Passion and poesy by fits to madness whirled.

XXX.

Though fettered to the spot we life begin,
We live, and die—the world unknown by sight—
The beauty and sublimity therein ;
And though our hearts ne'er heaved on Alpine height,
Nor sailed on iceberg through the Polar night,
Oh ! deem not thou, aloft where fortune shines,
Our day-spring darkness, our enjoyments slight,—
'Mid lovelier, loftier scenes the Bard reclines—
These dread stupendous forms *his* Alps and Appennines.

XXXI.

Kind Heaven to reimburse the shackled limb,
A world of wonders at our feet lets fall ;
As is the light that gilds them as they skim—
As is the hand that shaped them—seen by all—
Obsequious still to fancy's forming call :
The pleasure ground of Poet's boundless home ;
Spirits of thunder ! and the lightning's pall !
When dark from ocean's bed, abroad ye roam,
With half its waters drenched, o'er earth to fret and foam.

XXXII.

Spring's verdure fades, and Summer's flow'rets die ;
Ye never—Nature still keeps watch o'er you,
Ministrant delegates of the Most High !
Still marked with joy and gratulation due,
Whate'er your embassy, or form, or hue :
To few a blessing, and to all a bane,
Who may avow ? ye seek not to undo
Existence, but primeval life maintain ;
Hope, Love, and Mercy bear these fire-bolts o'er the plain.

XXXIII.

Again ye roll in beauty, and again
My soul mounts onwards with you, as 'twould melt
Into your essence. Who might him arraign,
Whose more than childhood o'er such beauty knelt;
Who would not reckon that the spirit dwelt
Of Poesy within you;—what so grand
Of all that brightest genius ever felt,
And breathed upon the world, in whisper bland,
Or loud as ocean's roar, against the rocky strand?

XXXIV.

That broken circle of huge forms abrupt,
Now most resemble thy infernal band,
Creative Milton! When with lightnings whipp'd
Through hell's unfathomed gulph,—they wait command,
The Arch-fiend rears aloft his snaky brand;
Now, in array of battle, up the steep
Of heaven they rush, as nought might them withstand;
Save one, on whose dark front sits anguish deep—
And now he lags behind, and now begins to weep.

XXXV.

'Tis divination!—round the silvery moon
Transformed are all—this, grown the dome august
Of monarch on whose head is placed a crown—
And that, an old tower mouldering into dust,
Its brazen portals mantled o'er with rust—
Who seemed the mightiest, towered most high, now shrinks
Into a cascade—curiously embossed
Its waters, as the moon upon it blinks—
But one, of form unchanged, that from the current drinks.

XXXVI.

As one who looks, with eye-lid close compressed,[6]
Through fancy's haze, and sees, as prompts desire,
Before him rise the regions of the blessed;
Or, wrapped in twilight darkness, spirits dire,
Shapes never formed before, and that expire,
For ever undefined; still whatsoe'er
You wish, you see;—thus these loved forms inspire
Like pleasure to the mind; thus wild appear,
And still, as most uncouth, the more our hearts revere.

XXXVII.

Who would not from him charm most potent cast,
Each tie terrestrial, and of heaven partake?
Who that beholds these wonders, and can waste
Such hours in slumber, ought not to awake?
From earliest youth I've drunk, in vain, to slake
Desire from these ambrosial floods that flow
Along the sky, when, Autumn, thou dost shake
From hill and dell thy mellowed charms below—
That all may upward look, reflect, and wiser grow.

XXXVIII.

The child is his sire's image; thus am I,
Thine, lonely Autumn, portraiture of thee;
Grief, more I've sometimes loved—to list the sigh
Suffused from swelling breast, than laughter free;
The softened accent and the cheek to see
Embathed in tears, and sighed when sunbeam drew
The pearly pleasure from me; sweet to dree
The tender pang, that, like a seraph, flew
From heart to heart, with love showered forth as summer dew.

XXXIX.

Show not the world thy heart! if thou therein
Hast treasured up a joy thou would'st preserve;
All panting to besiege the prize and win,—
Not foe alone will arm—but friendship swerve,
Yet, weep its flight;—the streaming tear will carve
Its passage to their soul, the dreaded arm
Upreared against you, instantly unnerve;
And now themselves will weep their own wrought harm;
With nature thus, even woe comes not without its charm.

XL.

The world's a counterfeit—not what 'twould seem:
Unsifted virtue oft but vice asleep.
Hate's burning brand was once fair friendship's beam;
And love—now envy—weaving malice deep,
Wakes wormwood fountains for the heart to weep;
This I have felt, and found it good to sheath
The heart within itself, and silent reap
The wild-flowers scattered o'er the mountain heath,—
Nor blend with, nor inhale, the world's contagious breath.

XLI.

Thus far thou'st led me, Autumn; it may be
I have stolen from thee like a playful child,
At times to wander; I have breathed of thee,
And drunk thy spirit till the heart was soiled
With other sadness, lasting and more wild;
I now must drink less deeply—thy own hue,
With mine, seems changed and changing, and less mild
Even as I trace thee—hast thou known how few
Of youthful friends are left, of youthful prospects true!

XLII.

Once in such scene—not thus as now I seem—
I hailed thee, Autumn! nor with tear nor sigh,
Birth-place of Hope! and many a blighted scheme
That reared its tender stem, and flowered too high;
And yet, methought, was strong, I longed to try
Its height to scale, to mount aloft thereon,
And reach the flower that blossomed in the sky;
But, while I watched the day-star that led on,
A cloud rolled dark between—'twas night that came anon.

XLIII.

It came, like lurking Death beneath the bloom
Of untouched beauty, not yet mellowed quite,
Light-hearted, laughing o'er a lovely doom,
And, in the eye, (undreaded coming blight,)
Lay Love amidst his lightnings to invite;—
It came like desert lake,[7] reflecting heaven,
'Midst sandy wreath and simoom[8] sparkling bright,
That, after pilgrim long to reach has striven,
Becomes a stifling ridge of dust, against him driven.

XLIV.

At once we weep, and smile, and sigh, and sing;
Our song of morn bathed in the tears of even;
Not far the spirit mounts on buoyant wing,
Till by some leaden thought 'tis downward driven:
Not many joys allure that are not riven
From our fond grasp, ere we the boon partake!
Elate ambition wings his flight to heaven,
And weaves his starry wreath, and makes earth quake—
Anon he sinks, he bleeds, amid the briery brake.

XLV.

Each season brought its change, pervading all,
That varied but our joys, that else had thriven
Not long, enwrapt in surfeit's leaden pall;
Sweet! when rough Winter lashed the surge to heaven,
Ship-crested; the deep-rooted oak was riven
From its fixed base, in the affrighting glare
Of wrathful tempest fiend, its branches driven
From their aerial home—like offspring fair,
O'er earth soon scattering wide, reft of parental care.

XLVI.

Sweet! Spring's approach, and Summer's maiden hue,
That onward dance to timbrel, harp, and song;
But fairer flow'rets, dipped in brighter dew,
And other sounds that thrill the heart more strong,
Spirit-awaking Power! to thee belong:
Thou fillest the streams that parching Summer drained,
The soul's dried springlets, that now bound along;—
Look round! behold each to its height regained!
What fountain now may tell heaven hath not richly rained!

XLVII.

I've thought not always thus, else could I trace
Of boyish feeling more, into thee wove;
But now I view thy sear and wrinkled face
With that unwavering, uncoquettish love
Which follows fluctuation—when we prove,
Perchance, a thousand—and the first withal,
Becomes again our choice—no more to rove:
Yet not in youth unloved thy wizard call,
Mid lonely night-wind's howl, and storm and snow-stream's brawl.

XLVIII.

For then I was all Poesy, and would breathe
Song of my own awaking, and still loved,
In vapours, clouds, and storms myself to sheath—
From these alone the sweets of being proved—
Partook their spirit, and perchance promoved
My own, it may be, higher than its height—
Loftier than darkening destiny behoved;—
Yet wheresoe'er a star of earth shone bright,
Or heaven, there was my home, my heart and my delight.

XLIX.

And, lapped in bliss, not seldom have I sought,
Along thy shivering nakedness, the linn,[9]
Up the steep mountain, when to madness wrought,
By Kelpy[10] foaming with convulsive grin,
Far down the crannying crag; shrieking therein,
Blood-craving cry! yet not with blood appeased—
Mingling with woodland spirit's warring din—
The heart that quakes with terror is released
By the blessed sight sublime—with awe and wonder seized.

L.

Lo! where it thunders down the dark abyss,
Its jaws wide opening, deeper and more deep,
With boiling, bursting, bellowing heave and hiss—
Starts up like horror from unhallowed sleep—
Shoots, like a fire-bolt, down the winding steep,
All winged with speechless terror! yet not long,
Till from its fright recovered, it doth creep,
O'erspent, unspirited, and—the woods among—
Is quickened into life with ousel's amorous song.

LI.

That eddy, all infulging on its brink,
And dizzying to destroy, unfathomed seems—
A passage to perdition,—and does shrink
Even from itself; and when the pale moon beams
At midnight lone, who hears and sees it, deems
A hive of warring demons therein yell,
And hies him home all terror-stricken—dreams
Of shapes, of which he dares not think nor tell,
That never were surpassed in most appalling hell.

LII.

Above, how bright and beautiful! the billow
Whirls tremblingly along, as it foreknew
What lay before, and lingers by the willow,
Twining itself around it, as it grew
Like yonder ivy round the margin yew;
Now slanting from the sluggish shallower brink
The waves concentre, rushing madly through
The rocks, deep channelled, as 'twere vain to shrink,
Till downward dashed to spray, in uproar wild they sink.

LIII.

No Iris, watered by the rising shower
Of foam, rests o'er you—ye no realms divide:—
I would not have ye: o'er my rock-hewn bower,
Alone for me thou pour'st thy dark'ling tide,—
No other sceptre reared to quell my pride;
'Twixt cliff and curve I stand, and call thee mine,
And, all enchanted, throws the veil aside
Of thy transparent billows, that so shine—
As poured from heaven, to bathe with baptism divine.

LIV.

And art thou not a river of the blessed!
So livingly serene thy crystal wave;
Untainted here his wing might seraph rest,
And look, and love, embrace, and round him lave
The bright mortality, and not dread a grave:
Surely some spirit, bright as his blue home,
Hath breathed o'er thee, and blessed thy gurgling cave
Of gushing waters, thus to be the dome
Of one whose love leads not with the vile world to roam.

LV.

Blessed spot! where love in heaven's tranquillity
Bathes his expanding spirit; the bright home
Of beauty, mellowed, melting in the glee
Of upland melody, above the tomb
Of village vapours—joy repelling gloom:
I seem, thus high, a link above the line
Of being underneath; the cannach's bloom
That whirls around—like happy spirit's shine—
Like the pure thoughts that teem o'er this, my home divine.

LVI.

Here, where the ravished soul and swimming eye
Walk, leap, and bound together to the shore—
Here will I live, and here, if death comes, die,—
Though this eternity, wherein I soar
Already, scarce can be extended more;
The distant azure hills of other land
Seem almost at my feet, in this pure air;
Distinct I trace stern Time's uplifted hand
Wide crannying sea-girt tower on its remotest strand.[11]

LVII.

Wild, witching scene! yet shall it be that I
From thee shall part? thy waters still roll on,
Leap, burn, and blaze with poetry—thy sky
Its drapery of clouds and stars enthrone
In everlasting loveliness thereon,
All beautifying, beautified,—the while
Above my bones, sepulchral ashes strown,
Shall hide thee from me? can it be, this hill,
That wood, these dells shall glow, and I lie cold and still?

LVIII.

Thus much I've sung, and still the exhaustless treasure
Glitters of golden youth, 'mid sufferance sad;
I may complete it in my hours of leisure,
From penury's hard grasp if these be had—
And dreaded evils blacken still the bad;
Yet dost thou oft—adversity—unlock
And sharpen wit, making dark prospects glad;—
As sweeps the swoll'n stream pebbles from the rock,
That hidden lay beneath its gentle summer shock.

LIX.

Fond, yet more fond, I've traced my youthful way
Through the rich rolling year, on raptured wing;
Though well I ween but dimly I pourtray
The radiant forms remembrance still would bring;
And yet for Bard, youth's potent sp'rit to fling,
Through its tombed tenement, till all, or one,
Saw, felt, and heard as his own soul did sing
In silent harmony, by sound undone—
Were holding out a lamp to light the unclouded sun.

CANTO II.

THE RETROSPECT.

CANTO II.

I.

Below'd, fair, fleeting paradise of life,
We still would linger o'er thee and adore;
So beautiful thy flowers, so rich, so rife—
Dear, dear departed Youth! behind, before,
And all around etherial! 'midst the roar
Of life's loud surging sea—*thou* land alone!
Of scanty bloom, weeds cankered to the core,
Is hence each coming stage—no ray thereon!
Untempting in the bud—poison and death when blown.

II.

All-charming Youth! of loveliest visions brought
By thee—sights, sounds, too beautiful to stay,—
Too bright for clay-bound spirit—this I caught:—
All underneath huge cataract I lay,
On hill whose summit held, apart from day,
Communion with the stars; on the far height
Of ever-vernal green, that grew alway,
Skimmed up and down etherial beings bright,
Towards earth, and their loved home, of living azure light.

III.

The moon shone sweetly, and the waters seemed—
Of spiritual life—an uncorrupted mass,
And breathed supernal song—and my soul streamed
Away in wonder-worship, tears of bliss,
And love that flamed more high than hot caress
Could kindle—gaze unsating! till from thence,
With kindred spirits bounding bodiless,
My own seemed fluttering o'er me, and, with glance
Of sympathy allured, I rose—when all at once

IV.

The stream stood still, and sparkled o'er it Sprite
Yet more divine, adorned with deathless crown
Of heaven-wrought flowers, and robe of flowing light,
That seemed a bright star shed, dilating on
In beautiful adoration, and skimmed down
The illumined waters with pervading blaze.
"What marvel these floods pause! and thou thereon,
Fair Spirit!" I exclaimed; "how shall I raise
My burning prayer to thee, thou goddess of all praise?"

V.

"The Genius I of Youth," mellifluous, bland,
The Goddess whispered; "I have watched thee long
With love maternal, seen thy soul withstand
The world, stern fortune, and, amid more strong
Unbaffled hate still carol forth her song—
This be thy guerdon;" straightforth in her hand
She held a shining mirror, large and long,
Whereon was writ "Remembrance," that like wand
Of wizard, deepened more the spell august and grand:

VI.

" See, brightened into beauty what seemed dark,
The lost, the latent shed forth glowing day;
This grown a sunbeam thou did'st deem a spark;
And that an ocean dashing forth its spray,
Thou deemed'st a little brooklet on thy way;
The tree become a forest, and the rose
A garden of delight; see Autumn gray
Laughs itself back to Spring, and o'er the snows
Of Winter, to adorn thy brow, the violet blows."

VII.

As thus I wondering stood, soft breathed the maid,
Soft as sweet whispering love, on love reclined;
And instantly the fleeting visions fade
Before me. Turn your eyes, and look behind—
There crowding bards, from lord to lowly hind,
A locust swarm, came bounding up the hill
Each seemed already *summitted* in mind,
And spurned his fellow,—one asleep and still,
Came plodding ever on, and rose with wakeful skill—

VIII.

A wreath in's hand of thistle, fern, and broom,—
He wrung its perfume forth, and scampering, to
An Eden hied—of bramble flowers in bloom—
'Mid prickly penance, dashed from thence the dew
Upon his brow, his spirit to imbue
And blend with nature—a blood shower o'erstreams
His face, and opes a wished-for passage through,
The cliff before him, now some Muse he deems,
Embraces, and beats out a thousand rainbow dreams.

IX.

O'er his fallen fellow, mark yon dreadful form,
The while his eye-ball burns with living gore,
Escargatoire with brandished fire-bolt storm—
The thunder list, to echo forth its roar,
And ocean drag with all its waves ashore;
'Gulfed in an earthquake at full stretch he lies,
And shakes astounded nature, as with oar
Skims the light skiff;—his nostrils' fume forth flies,
Fair mantling earth, and forms the drapery of the skies—

X.

Anon he stalks by the Lethean stream,
Bard, patriot, seer, and sect—and systems grave,
Forgotten, from oblivion to redeem;
With eagle's swoop divides the darkling wave,
Dives to its bottom—youthful glory's grave—
Drags forth and brings to life, and gilds more fair,
The learned, the witty, and long latent brave;
Before him bow Wolfe, Washington, Voltaire;
Newton, Napoleon drenched, on the banks re-appear.

XI.

Another yet behold, more grand, sublime,
In whose bright beam all others look aghast;
He comes from tour through fair Elysian clime,
To unroll all wonders yet to come or past—
Himself a prodigy shall ever last;
Spans with the rainbow, ocean, earth, and sky,
Soars far, where sunbeam ne'er might pry, nor trust
His wing might noteless seraph; and, thus high,
The stars in vassalage holds, like steer couched on small fly.

XII.

Himself thus rates he, phrenzied in the bright
And burning beams of beauty, and the glow
Of scenes unfurled—the loveliest, most to blight;
Thus dreams elate—whilst all the world avow
Such scribbling dog should whipped be to the plough;
Upborne on false wing, he awhile may soar,
Yet down at length shall dash—already, lo!
His dripping pinion's drenched with his own gore—
The o'erblown bubble bursts, he sinks, and all is o'er.

XIII.

But see! uprising from yon orient stream,
Wreathed Bard, with looks of sympathy and love;
Shining, and shedding forth a glorious beam;
'Tis his with tales of woe the heart to move,
And sing of hill and dell where nations strove,
And fire with amorous flame—spread thou thy wing,
No more through lone oblivion's shades to rove,
And drink of our unsating, sacred spring,
Till echo of thy fame through every isle shall ring.

XIV.

Up the far steep of science thou didst climb
Unaided, unassuming child of nature!
Though tossed by adverse fate, with step sublime,
And unsuppressive soul; most noble creature!
That time will beautify, as these defeature,
Glory to thee! thou art not borne on whim;
Than all combined, of more Titanic stature—
Reach forth thy hand to heaven, quell these clouds dim,
Thy cup of coming bliss shall sparkle o'er the brim.

XV.

These, disappearing, into shapes recede,
Dark and again more dark, till, blent with night,
I turned me round the soul with its first meed
To cherish—when above the beauteous Sprite
Misshapen Phantom rose upon my sight,
Lank, meagre, and appalling ; with stern look,
Slow shooting through the Goddess deep death-blight;
But not dismay—I gazed till her frame shook
With dissolution's pang, and then no more could brook.

XVI.

" On me wreck forth thy fury ! spare ! oh, spare
The guiltless ! god of ruin," I exclaimed ;
" Thou hast torn from me all life deemed most dear,
With agonies, immedicable, maimed,—
And is my sole remaining solace claimed
To glut thy gorging appetite ?"—for known
To Bards the unsightly form, who most are tamed
Beneath his talons ; I awoke—not gone
The spectre, Penury, that lowered when morning shone.

XVII.

Stern Poverty ! how heavy and how hard—
The struggling heart down pressing even to death—
Thou lay'st thy icy fingers on the Bard—
Thy daggers, Poesy did first unsheath,
Transfix, pale heaving Hope at every breath ;
No voice to soothe—of all the world even one
Were bliss ; by early friends now deemed beneath
Their high-flown love, their kind consolement gone—
'Mid the still black'ning storm, unsheltered and alone.

XVIII.

Before thy freezing breath we shrink afar,
And when removed, to stand or fly we pause,
Thou roll'st upon us like the rush of war,
And down we sink in Ruin's earthquake jaws;
And, since ourselves have been the bitter cause,
No arm to aid, no eye to pity, near;
And what in happier life might find applause,
Brings but the rude reproach, and vulgar sneer,
To blight the bleeding heart, and sharpen doom severe.

XIX.

Shower on me all thy plagues! yet not aghast
Will I sink underneath thee; the wild wave
Shall sleep beneath thee—tower o'ersetting blast—
Or e'er I shrink before thee to a slave,
Or bend beneath thee to a timeless grave;
Creation fails not with the bright day gone;
Fair flowers outlive the spring; and in its cave
The diamond wars with darkness, ripening on;
The tree stands, and thus I, in bloom 'mid winter lone.

XX.

For ever loved whate'er our youth revered,
Familiarized with heart, or ear, or eye;
The scene, however wild, in which upreared;
The tree that with us grew to manhood high;
The bush that screened us from the summer sky;
Upon its limber bough, the birds that hymned,
Blent with the bee's unchang'd monotony:
The wild fowl o'er the lake that flew or skimmed;
The caterwauling owl, by darkness unbedimmed;

XXI.

The stream attracted zephyr ; the long whine
Of night breeze, bathed in redolence, astound
Like strong ; the bosom-chord, with touch divine,
That thrills through life amid the ruin round :
As germ, of plant long perished, under ground
Is wrapped in death, yet lives, awaiting spring ;—
Thus dear the dell with broom and thistle crowned ;
The gently heaving height, whose golden ling
A sweeter perfume breathes than evening's roseate wing.

XXII.

For ever loved whatever may have been
Our youthful sports and prowess, friendships bland,
Encounter fierce with rivals of stern mien,
And wrathful rolling eye, and firm clenched hand ;
We, haply, all their efforts would withstand
For victory, and win the bloodless field,
And village glory, and for aye, command
O'er them—o'er those that to the vanquished yield,—
The thought delights us still, and yet with heart unsteeled.

XXIII.

War's boyhood this; thus rose the fire-eyed child,
So soft, so mild throughout, as if allied
To peace, and love, and virtue ; now more wild
As near approaching manhood, he has hied
Abroad, with dagger, dress, and feature dyed
In blood, to blaze his nature and his name ;
Like eagle, hung upon himself, descried,
All heedless of the world—and now we blame
Our boyish thirst of war, and blot those scenes with shame.

XXIV.

O'er earth *he* roams, with crown, and covering formed
Of clotted crimson, life's selectest shower
Still thickening o'er him—monarchies alarmed,
And states, to yield the still extorted dower
Of blood, the ocean, earth, and sky deflower;
And is thy doom unwritten, dreadful fiend!
No fitting scourge prepared to sack thy power!—
With God's red-rolling wrath yon heavens shall bend,
For ever thee to blast, thy bone-built throne to rend.

XXV.

To quell the fiend, to lop this limb from death,
And maim earth's mortal foe, the good may strive;
Yet these to thwart, power pants till out of breath—
When fall the mighty, mightier props survive;
Even bards, though craven-hearted the whole hive,
And shrink convulsed at sight of bloody brand,
Have sung it from its scabbard; fame wont thrive,
(Its blasted branches bare and naked stand,)
That takes not root in blood, and drinks from War's red hand.

XXVI.

Upon an ocean dark of gathered tears,
Drained from war-wasted lands, War's blood-hounds float;
Seek they its haven, earth still backward steers;
Their doom—no more to find a resting spot;
But sympathy be yours whose wayward lot,
To bathe in life-warm waves of smoking gore,
Has led reluctant or from tower or cot,
Commanding or commanded, evermore
Beloved be ye, with half your deeds forgot when o'er.

XXVII.

That sympathy be *thine*, who ploughs the wave,
From home, and love, and him, whose agony
Intense, had rested lighter on thy grave,
Than then the dear, the living loss to dree,
As 'kerchiefs waved farewell to shore—to sea;
Then all creation's loveliest objects seemed
The shadows of an idle dream to me:
From lip, no sound; from eye, no tear-drop streamed;
The heart withheld the bliss,—I stood as one that dreamed.

XXVIII.

I looked, till like a cloud thy dear bark seemed,
Pale on some distant summer sky at even;—
Delirium's fevered flash then o'er me gleamed,
I stared on vacancy, I felt as riven
From life, and love, and bliss, and hope, and heaven;
For one fond look, one word, one short embrace,
A world of paltry gold I would have given;
Who in this bosom e'er can fill thy place?
Who, charming e'er so high, thy memory dear efface!

XXIX.

The live long night I lingered on the strand,
'Mid roaring waters and the sea-fowl's cry;
Of home I thought not—could nor sit, nor stand,
Nor rest reclined, nor heave the lightest sigh,
Nor greet light-hearted mariner passing by,
Nor gaze—but on the deep: I sent forth Hope,
That looked, and looked, and then lay down to die,
Upon the billow; earth had now no prop
For me to lean upon, nor plant nor flower to crop:

XXX.

Upon a cliff at length I threw me down,
As feeling with quick rush had reached life's bourne;
Grief quelled, by its own blight; yet seemed I lone
As the wild wind that sung through chinks wave-worn
From ocean's breast below—I seemed forlorn—
Yet knew not why nor where;—a gushing stream [1]
Joined its eternity as 'twere in scorn,
And would not mingle—I myself did seem
The same, nor slept nor woke—a dark delirious dream!

XXXI.

A speckled flock of sportive clouds were borne—
A ruffian wind their shepherd—o'er the sky;
As hurrying to withhold the coming morn,
And I did bless them with a thankful sigh,
And wished, if not already dead, to die;
For agonizing memory's fitful flash
Again would sparkle o'er me, and then fly;
And while of nothingness the deep dark hush
Prevailed, conflicting waves of passion on would rush.

XXXII.

That rushing storm, o'erblown, hath left behind
Wrecks that must still remain—when grief's turmoil
Still seeks the soul the balm it used to find;
Possessed of fortune's boon—to share the spoil.
Judge of my youthful song! whose fav'ring smile
And kindling aspect bade me not despair;
Thy parting presage, seated by the rill,
Of more than village glory, died not there,
But much ere this hath cost, oh! many a hidden care.

XXXIII.

To be thyself a tyrant, or to crouch,
Alike revolting—ill thou would'st sustain
Compulsion stern, or bear the foul reproach,
That brought to others—if not joy, not pain;
Thy cheek ne'er wore disguise, thou could'st not feign
Submission, when thy proud heart did rebel;
To bare the sword, to trample o'er the slain
As stones that cumber; fitted worse to dwell
With those such deeds who boast—that were to thee as hell.

XXXIV.

Thou would'st return! thy broken spirit longs
To be renewed with one sweet draught of home;
To lift the rusted lyre, forget thy wrongs,
And deem the cottage more than earthly dome,
Nor ever from the sweet seclusion roam;—
Thou deem'st not youth's fair portraiture, still drawn,
Is but a likeness of the dead—not from
Thyself alone, but from the world withdrawn,
The joys thy dreaming heart still hoards by sweet Burnawn.[2]

XXXV.

Clear, wild, romantic rill! at sound of thee
How thrilled affection throbs through every vein!
A lovelier fountain search were vain to see;
From hills so rich, ne'er leaped into the main
Thy likeness yet, nor rolled through wealthier plain.
The genius of thy waters is the maid
That moistened Eden—and, unhurt, here reign
Peace, love, primeval purity, arrayed
In garb that peccancy to stain yet never strayed.

XXXVI.

By thee first kindled, in my soul the fire
That still must burn—though love and life decay :
In youth's sweet spring first woke my infant lyre
In thy blessed bowers : I sung my later lay
In concert with thy dashing billow's play.
My soul still sickens, sad—unconscious why—
And nerved no longer if from thee away.
Fountain of life! here all my treasures lie,
In thee I live, I breathe, and in thy absence die.

XXXVII.

And, far amidst these hills, where thou dost spring,
Whither so oft we traced thee, through the vale
And woods that with thy ceaseless echoes ring,
That gather o'er thee, and, enamoured, pale
Thy bed of beauty from the autumnal gale—
Where envious winter howls o'er vernal bloom
He may not blight, how much soe'er assail—
Life's first sweet breath above these woodlands' gloom,
Beside thy source I breathed, and thither still would roam.

XXXVIII.

Roll on, sweet streamlet! in thy fairy dream;—
Bright are thy banks with verdure, and thy bowers
With bloom and melody :—the beauteous gleam
Thou wearest, on thy wave and in thy flowers,
That led us to thee, in our buoyant hours
Of blissful childhood, when the heart ran o'er,
And lip and eye spoke love. Oh! ye blessed Powers
That here preside, waft back to his loved shore,
And these dear haunts, the form so fitted to adore!

XXXIX.

Long had we drunk, and still together drained,
The sweets of childhood, youth, and riper days,
From many a blissful fount, that waxed or waned,
As we did seek or shun—led by our lays
Through sunny mead or subterranean maze;
And still where'er we wandered, at our wish
Up rose life's fair profusion, and our praise;
Scaled we Hope's ragged steep—no cliff to crush,
Loosed by our light embrace, in thunder down would rush.

XL.

The varied pastime, and the heart's soft swell
O'er hidden beauty—sweetest to explore—
Deep, dark, wild, woody Connor,[3] thou canst tell,
Oh! thou can'st tell, but never can'st restore!
Still roll thy peaceful waters to the shore;
Still bloom thy green bowers on the rocky rise,
Where hewn, hath giant hand, thy caverns hoar;
And green the grove, whose birds of varying dyes
Still sing thy summer past, and war with wintry skies.

XLI.

Thou art unchanged, in feature still the same;
And breathed is now thy song, as clarion shrill,
To woo me from myself, the world and fame,
And bid thy bowers again their dews distil
Around the heart, and purifying fill:—
"The lights of cherub-beauty, unalloyed,
That fluttered o'er thy childhood, cherish still:
Ah! why forsake the scenes that never cloyed,
To be with dreams, ev'n less than lightest dreams, decoyed."

XLII.

Delightful haunt! of thee the deepening thought,
With all its woe still conjures up the tale
Of true, not guiltless love, from far that sought
In thy wild shades a shelter from the gale
Of lowering tempest mustering to assail;
Wood, grot, and dell yet breathe the tender theme,
And winds prolong its melancholy wail;
Its joys retained in flower and sun-bright stream—
Its shuddering horrors waked in prey-birds' midnight scream.

XLIII.

'Twas love, by reason spurned—love spurning fame,
Wealth, grandeur, pride, and power, and all the world—
That under foot trod wedlock's holy name,
And round opponents proud defiance hurled,
And deep, and deeper down the vortex whirled;
Both fair of form, both beautiful of mind,
And much sound virtue either heart unfurled;
Hers was a soul too tender, his, though kind,
Not open—he who searched had still much more to find.

XLIV.

And many searched, and sought, and tried to win;
And many searched, and sought, and tried in vain;
The soul portcullised, walled itself within,
Opened its portals, few, how few! to gain—
Even these reluctant, as with baffled pain;—
But there was one, though war she did not wage,
Unbarred, and shut, threw down, upreared again
At pleasure, and in all provoked not rage,
Nor did the heart from love an instant disengage.

XLV.

Whilst others strained, from intercourse, their all
Of earthly good, oft stamped with indesert,
He walked where life's ambrosial dews did fall,
And held communion with his glowing heart:
So closed upon himself nought might him thwart:
'Mid vulgar throng if thrown by niggard fate—
He'd from his path with hasty step depart,
To shun a salutation—not in hate,
But diffidence, that blushed even at its own retreat.

XLVI.

All eloquent with nature; but with man
Mute, cold, and sullen, even from youth—as 'twere
Entombed in thought none but himself might scan.
Whilst his dark eye seemed sunk with laden care,
'Twas angel Poesy sat shadowing there,
And shut him from himself; nor durst intrude
That instant ought of earth, or dread, or fear,
Pain, pleasure—not even passion—save what would
Burst on him from wild theme, and stir his sleeping blood.

XLVII.

The child of more than melancholy sadness
Yet oft was he—deep wrapped in darkest gloom,
That tinged his spirit with the hues of madness,
And laid in ashes his life's summer-bloom:
To war with phantoms his the dreadful doom,
Fiends strengthening o'er the deadly strife—their prey,
The wide strewn withered wreck of his soul's tomb.
None knew the death within: amid the gay,
Mirth sparkled in his cheek, like verdure o'er our clay.

XLVIII.

'Twas thus, they sought far Connor's sylvan site—
In the deep solitude themselves inurned;
Oft might be seen their cottage: blazing bright—
As hind, or huntsman from his toils returned—
Thy beacon, Love! that long these wilds adorned.
O'er woe's wild hue to shed unfleeting joy!
Rowena strove, young Herbert's bosom burned;
No watch-dog there was sentinel'd, to annoy
Low stooping beggared age, or wandering orphan boy.

XLIX.

There is a gem—our first sire let it fall—
That baffled all his after search to find;
Age after age his offspring, each and all,
To gain the treasure, ransacked, unconfined,
Earth, ocean, air, and sky, apart, combined;
Philosophy pursued it up to heaven,
Yet in remotest orb her hopes resigned;
Hills were uptorn, and lands to ruin driven,
Where av'rice, Wisdom's self hath searched, yet none have thriven.

L.

This fair, fond couple, driven by haggard fate,
And drawn by deep affection, sought the prize,
And found it in dark Connor's wild retreat:
Thus reeked they, and so spoke their beaming eyes
That rained, 'mid brimful bliss—like summer skies
Watering a long parched wilderness,—anon
Springs the gay verdure, vernal flowerets rise;—
They looked, they pressed, yet not its lustre gone;—
'Twas unstained, beautiful, and bright as first it shone.

LI.

Here Herbert woke his wild romantic lyre
O'er themes his soul had long desired to scan;
And, chief, love leapt along its strings of fire,
And buoyant childhood, light as first it ran—
The electric spirit of life's leaden span;
He thence through manhood traced the broken dream,
Till, sad, it sickened into autumn wan;
Reclined in crannied cavern's twilight gleam,
Thus would his descant flow o'er the lone rushing stream:—

LII.

"Sweet retrospect! could fate again bestow
Those hours ere time had reared on life's flowered spray
That thorn reflection, gladly would I throw
The intervening years of care away,
And still 'midst Boyhood's sunny bowers delay;
When siren Poesy wove dreams of bliss;
When passion swayed, unconscious of its sway;
When heaven's smile sweetened the enchanting kiss
Of innocence, and hope, and halcyon happiness.

LIII.

"More wild, Love passed along the golden dream,
All sparkling as the fleecy summer sky;
As Autumn eve, when o'er the stilly stream
The white mists thicken, and the moonbeams fly,
And winds o'er withered wood-roof whisper by;—
My eye swam in Love's ecstacy, and brought
Fond pangs, electric pulses, life's first sigh;
Nature I recked not, now with sadness fraught,
And, Boyhood if not past—its pleasures shrunk to nought.

LIV.

"Oh! 'tis a bitter world; were we to drink
From all the wormwood fountains that o'erflow
Life's melancholy way, the soul would sink
With the unceasing draught. Awhile we glow
With boundless wishes, ere the world we know;
From youth's bland visions we at last awake—
Then comes the counter charm to all below;
Life that did seem a star on stirless lake,
Becomes a shattered skiff, that waves and tempests shake.

LV.

"Bright o'er remembrance beams the hallowed morn
Of Reason, when discrimination threw
Her lights around me, and I left with scorn
The drowsy, darkened multitude, and flew
To minds illumed, where pleasures, prized by few,
Delights unsating, sheltered from the storm,
Lay thick as summer flowers, whose perfume drew
To where they bloomed, of most enchanting form,
And came not wintry blight to wither and alarm.

LVI.

"And there was happiest love that knew not change
And fondest friendships fading not away;
Hearts that for ever heaved, but not to range,
And eyes that flashed the intellectual ray:
Oh! could those lights divine in death decay,
And leave me darkened, darker than before?
Died all the wit that early did display,
Supernal grandeur's undiminished store?
Fled all its beauty, bright, and brightening evermore?

LVII.

There lived on high, 'mongst woody cliffs concealed,
In that same solitude, enchantress dire ;
Before whose spellful breath, rocks, mountains reeled,
And whirlwinds swept down forests through her ire ;
Her eye the lightning, thunder her loud lyre ;
Each element her vassal ; the wild wave
Above the affrighted hills at her desire
Leaped from the low scooped vale ; – thus fame would rave :
Young Herbert heard the tale, and sought her rock-hewn cave.

LVIII.

'Twas eve—and prey birds flapped their pinions rife,
As Herbert hied along that lovely vale ;
O'er the deep stream, a cavern on the cliff,
That sprouting underwood clung round to pale,
Now met his eye, and sounds his ear assail
Of melody, so winning and so wild,
That lured him on, the rugged height to scale :
The stars were clustered round the moon, and mild
The sky, that on the wave lay like a sleeping child.

LIX.

But as the acclivous steep, through bramble, brake,
On hand and foot he scaled, he turned him round ;
And now cloud rolled on cloud,—like moon-lit lake,
The sky becoming bright, with snow wreaths crowned,
The soften'd stars that hid not, though deep bound
In their transparent prison ; like bright eyes
In the quick gush of fitful sadness drowned,
And fading slow in death—till long his prize,—
They lose all lustre—quenched even ere the frail frame dies.

LX.

Now rapid as the hurrying shades of eve
Descend and deepen o'er some wint'ry site,
Where all day long frost's hairy fingers weave
Earth o'er, as 'twere with eyes, quick, sparkling, bright,
And tree and stone seem lit with living light;
Thus o'er that sky, in Alpine terror stole
Shapes, wrapped in hues of death, that quenched in night
All but one lonely star, nor ceased to roll,
Till shrouded in the gloom young Herbert's bleeding soul.

LXI.

The mustering winds now like a giant rise
From sleep in thunder, lone, and wild, and high;
And, tempest-winged, the showery torrent flies,
As if the shattered windows of the sky
Again were opened, and a world to die;
The drooping youth essayed to turn, but found
The river at his feet, that late did lie
By the steep's base below, with scarce a sound—
A sleeping melody that hushed all nature round.

LXII.

Slow, sad, and drenched throughout, he crept along,
Yet knew not whither—wished no more to see
Or sorceress, or list her siren song;
But breathed a prayer, and wept, and vowed to be
Henceforth the child of Hope—though hard to dree,
This once should mercy spare; and, nerved anew,
Fast from that fatal cavern sped, as he
All ainly reeked: for deeper still night threw
Her horrors o'er the scene, her darkness round him drew.

LXIII.

Groping he moved along, when all at once
The caverned cliff rose o'er him, and, anon
There pale and postrate, met his withered glance,
In lightning's livid flash that o'er him shone,
The form of one too well and deeply known;
Who, come to seek the partner of her soul,
Had perished in the storm: no heart of stone
Was his, but o'er him sudden phrenzy stole,—
Heaven's best boon, when it may, and can no more console.

LXIV.

And for a time he stirred him not, but lay
And looked upon the dead, the features fair,
The bloom, though chilled in death, not yet away;
And still he pressed—nor deemed that life thrilled there
No longer;—the quick feeling of despair
Now rolled upon him like the rushing wave,
And down the rock's dread perpendicular
They headlong hurled, so fleet no arm might save—
In grief's floods steeped through life—and found a watery grave.

LXV.

Thus burst the unholy bond:—what offspring crowned
That wild, yet never-ebbing love, remains
To be discovered—search hath never found;
Sad! found, where love parental, unsustains:
Our life's a lazar-house of cureless pains,
A sire, a mother only can allay
Its teeming sorrows, with the dewy strains
Of sympathy, that ever and alway
We hear, feel, see, in sounds more sweet than angel's lay.

LXVI.

How fair Rowena reached the cliff above,
Or crossed the dark wild waters, none e'er knew;
Though feeble human power, what will not love
Accomplish! what strong fetters burst not through!
But, driven by love, what will not woman do—
What hath not woman done! when Hope, long o'er,
Hath crined[4] and crumbled into ashes—you
Sweet woman! only can that light restore,
Thy potency begins when man's strength is no more.

LXVII.

Man, the proud scoffer, may contemn; though all
His schemes of bliss twine round thee—spurn and threat:
Yet, ever and anon, when ills befall,
He casts himself a suppliant at thy feet;
Frozen apathy not long his wintry seat
May fix where thou should'st sway—sole mortal boon
That charm'st through life, and mak'st a death-bed sweet;
Grief fades in thy bright beam like mists from noon,
Or crags that melt in light beneath the summer moon.

LXVIII.

Heaven's fairest semblance, woman! fount where lies
True sympathy alone; sweet woman's ire
Ends with her weeping, like a cloud that dies
Away when emptied; but there is a fire
No tears may stifle, rooted, dark desire
Of vengeance in proud man, inflamed by time,
Which not till life-blood quench it can expire;
Like shower of summer dropped from heavenly clime,
To soften, brighten earth, is woman; man, all crime.

LXIX.

Of love, unquenched through life, in death that shone,
Of their wild woes the tale hath long gone by;
Its last faint, fitful echo heard alone,
If chance you roam these woodlands—thus found I
This little lovely gem, that well might vie
(From its rust fetters freed, its prison strong,)
With loveliest treasure underneath the sky;
But as it is, its rays confus'dly throng,
Crude cantlet of sweet, wild, and wiuding, witching song.

NOTES.

NOTES TO CANTO I.

Note 1.—Page 4.

And now the mock-bird trills its varying notes.

I have often wondered that no notice has been taken of this sweetly imitative melodist. It is very small, and of a gray colour, and, if I mistake not, known amongst the peasantry of Scotland by the term "Whittie-whey bird." Often in my evening rambles, more especially in the autumnal season, have I been amused and charmed with its emulous notes, when, though every other songster was silent, the woodlands seemed to ring with innumerable warblers —intermingling their melody, or answering each other

Note 2.—Page 5.

For ever on the wing—like warning Gnome.

There was formerly a general belief, and in many places is so still, of the existence of warning spirits, or phantoms that assume the form and features of those who are about to die, or, at least, who will not live long afterwards, though at the time in perfect health; never seen by the persons themselves; and no sooner perceived by any one, than instantly vanishing from view.

Note 3.—Page 8.

To Lockhart's Tower now flocked we forth.

Lockhart's Tower, or Barr Castle, is a gray, Gothic, and stately pile; one of the mightiest vestiges of feudal times, in the environs of my native village, and northern extremity of the district of Kyle, in Ayrshire; and though for ages it has remained desolate, and now seems a ruin, the hand of time has pressed but lightly on its strong and massy frame. Till of late years, a beautiful spreading plane-tree grew out from the upper part of the wall, and proudly overlooked its broad and moss-grown battlements, (the tree alluded to in the poem of "Barr Castle,") the glory, the delight of the village; the resort and play-place of venturous boyhood.

Note 4.—Page 8.

Sovereignty to hold.

Hand-ball playing is, and has long been, a favourite amusement with the villagers of Galston, many of whom are proficients in the pastime. The eastern wall of Barr castle is the principal spot where the sport is carried on ; and in the summer evenings, the young men, and eke by a time the village patriarch, whose spirit has sadly overrated his physical powers, may be seen at the recreation, producing health and agility to their frames, and much amusement to others. From a want of facilities favourable to the practice of the game, it is not so common in any other town in Ayrshire ; hence the fame of the Galston players, who have every advantage in this way to boast of.

Note 5.—Page 8.

To its far top light scaled the maniac maid.

This, though a gray tradition, is still strongly attested and believed by many around ; though little more is known than what I have related of the melancholy tale. She was young, beautiful, and high born, driven by unhappy affection into gloom and melancholy, succeeded by madness, which at length terminated in this appalling act. About a quarter of a mile beyond Barr Castle, by the rivulet Burnawn, is still seen the site of the romantic catastrophe—with the bowed and blighted ash till of late suspended over the falling waters, rushing into the eddy.

Note 6.—Page 13.

As one who looks with eye-lid close compressed.

This image, carried thus far, may to some appear fantastical, or at least poetically exaggerated ; others again will realize it in its fullest extent. The source of this romantic amusement is, if I mistake not, entirely regulated by the imagination. These, therefore, endowed in the greatest degree with this creative power of the mind, will not fail to discover at once the truth of this delineation. Press the eye lightly with your hand, and you are instantly immersed in the gloom of a melancholy twilight, wrapped in the most rueful scenes, and surrounded by unhallowed and haggard forms of every dimension. Again, press the eye-lid more hard, and suddenly you are transported into realms of almost insufferable effulgence of glory and beauty—ethereal shapes of every delightful hue fluttering above, beneath, and around you,—spirits of tranquillity retreating hurriedly from view, if but the slightest motion is made; et, as it were, disappearing only to usher in objects of greater delight.

Note 7.—Page 15.

.....*Like desert lake.*

This Phenomenon is occasioned by the sun basking at certain times or places on the sultry sands of the desert, where the thirsty traveller beholds at a distance the appearance of a clear, smooth pool of water, but which, as he approaches, gradually becomes shallow and more shallow, dim and again more dim, till he is ingulphed in a wreath of burning sand, where the seeming waters slept and shone so invitingly a little before.

Note 8.—Page 15.

'Midst sandy wreath and simoom sparkling bright.

SIMOOM—a dreadful blast which blows over the deserts of Arabia, franght with suffocating vapour, and fatal to all who continue within its range.

Note 9.—Page 17.

.....*The linn.*

LINN—a cataract, a waterfall.

Note 10.—Page 17.

By Kelpy foaming with convulsive grin.

WATER-KELPIES—a sort of unsightly and implacable furies, said to be cherished with the screams of drowning persons—frequenting overflowing rivers and dangerous fords to decoy the unwary into the rushing waters, and then leaving them to their fate.

Note 11.—Page 19.

Wide crannying sea-girt tower on its remotest strand.

In a clear day the view from the face of Galston Hill extends over the country for many miles, taking in the range of the "hills of Galloway" on the south-west; west and north-west, the estuary of the Clyde, with the lofty mountain peaks of Arran, at the south end of which stands the light-house of Pladda,—the object alluded to above; while to the north and north-east, the Highland hills, particularly the "lofty Benlomond," and the fertile plains of Cunningham meet the view, the whole forming a scene embodying much that is grand and beautiful in nature, and peculiarly calculated to awaken the sympathies of the poetic soul.

NOTES TO CANTO II.

Note 1.—Page 33.

.....A gushing stream
Joined its eternity, as 'twere in scorn,
And would not mingle.

It is well known, that after a storm, and for a considerable time, the fresh waters are seen rolling brown along the shore, and far into itself repelling the passive ocean, where their widely contrasted hues are beheld meeting, but not mingling, and still apart amidst the wildest commotion.

Note 2.—Page 34.

The joys thy dreaming heart still hoards by sweet Burnawn.

Burnawn, or Burnann, a rich romantic rivulet, abounding with jaspers, pebbles, and other precious stones—coming down from the heights of Kyle, and winding through a variety of wild and uncultured scenery, till it empties itself into the Irvine, at the village of Galston.

Note 3.—Page 36.

.....Deep, dark, wild, woody Connor.

CONNOR,—a rugged and picturesque scene in the district of Kyle, enveloped in woods, and scooped out by nature so deep beneath the level of the adjacent plains, that you ramble on and scarce discover a change of scenery, till you are embosomed in a lonely and sequestered hermitage of woods, and streams, and vales, and underwood of all sorts, scrambling up the high and almost perpendicular acclivities.

Note 4.—Page 45.

Hath crined and crumbled into ashes.

CRINED,—to shrink away into nothing, to dry gradually into dust.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

TO

MR JOHN MOORE,

REPORTER FOR THE "AYR ADVERTISER," AND EDITOR OF THE PRESENT VOLUME,

THE FOLLOWING MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

ARE DEDICATED, AS A MARK OF THE AUTHOR'S GRATITUDE FOR HIS DISINTERESTED KINDNESS.

JOHN WRIGHT.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

TO THE QUEEN

BEFORE HER CORONATION.

[A copy of the following Poem was sent to Her MAJESTY, who, through her Secretary, J. Wheatley, Esq., sent the Author a Letter of acknowledgment as follows :—" ST. JAMES' PALACE,—Her MAJESTY is highly " honoured by the receipt of the enclosed Poem, and, through her Se- " cretary, begs to testify her utmost gratitude."]

VICTORIA! England's vestal Queen,
Heaven's smile be on thy lot for aye—
Elizabeth and Anne be seen
In thee restored, with brightening ray.
The homage of the free is thine—
Brave and enlightened hearts—whose pride
Is to uphold their rights divine ;
Or, Martyrs fall by Freedom's side.

Still, keeping thy Brittania free,
Be Peace the laurel of thy reign:—
On land our leading-star thou'lt be—
Our guardian Goddess on the main.
In love—the nations knit as one—
Wake the sweet strains of loyaltie :
They hail the era that's begun,
And hang their golden hopes on thee.

Oh, ne'er may Discord's pennon wave
To soil the royal banners fair!
May envy in her fetters rave,
And Discontent her ruin share!
Propitious Power surround thy throne,
And wider be thy sway unfurled--
To cheer far lands with light unknown—
Thou Mediatrix of the world!

'Tis sweet to see the snow-drop spread,
While winter's chilly tempests blow;
'Tis sweet to see the whin-blooms shed
Their gaudy tints 'mongst wreaths of snow;
'Tis sweet to hear the red-breast sing
The birth-song of the infant year;
So sweet's thy fair unfolding Spring—
Our youthful Queen—Victoria dear!

Yet seem'st thou Nature's holier boon,
So richly cast in "rapture's mould:"
When broadly hangs the harvest moon,
O'er ripening fields of green and gold:
When spangled clouds are sailing slow—
Like liv'ried pages round their Queen;
When all is fairy land below—
And all is bliss in æther seen:

Millenial glory—as it runs
Along earth's darkened mental skies—
Shine o'er thine Albion, like the sun's
First dawning beam on Paradise.

Embraced thy sceptre be, and crowned
The Isles with Freedom, back to scare
Those fiends of earth, that all around
Have ravaged and laid Nature bare.

When Albion—beautiful and free—
O'er half the habitable earth
First swayed, and throned her on the sea,
And gave to Art and Science birth,
She tow'ring stood in strength and bloom,
Till knavery knawed her inmost core:
Consign such traitors to their doom!
And Freedom's pilfered sweets restore.

Thine is no superhuman arm:—
We ask no miracles of thee;
But, thou hast in thy power to harm,
Or set the burthened nations free.
We thee adjure—our gracious liege—
To grant a true, not mock Reform;
And our warm prayers shall Heaven besiege,
To shield thee safe from every storm.

Thou'rt young and guileless—in thy ear
Will Flattery pour her dulcet lay,
To throw back Justice to the rear,
And witch thee from thyself away;—
Adoring suppliants low will crouch,
Beyond what is to mortal due;
But trust them not—nine-tenths of such
Are hollow-hearted and untrue.

Thou'rt young—and youthful follies will
In less or more degree—prevail;
Thou'rt a rich argosie—and skill
Will be required to guide thy sail:
Thou art an Houri of the earth,
Whom Araby's fond seer would cull
Before his own—of heavenly birth—
Reclining by the wine-stream's lull.

Thou'rt young and tempting—and a host
Of suitors, to obtain thy smile—
And share thy sceptre—that proud boast—
From 'far shall seek the sea-girt Isle;
But let not youth's affections snare
Thy judgment, like woe's hapless child—
The Scottish Mary—good and fair,
But plunged, by love, in errors wild.

Victoria! may the hand of fate
Spare thee through many a rolling year,
And thy Britannia wax more great,
And nations blest thy reign endear.
May Folly find a sure defeat—
That still the bark of State would steer!
The Virtues all thy favour meet,
And Wisdom ever have thine ear!

ON TEMPERANCE.

—

Eventful institution! spreading wide
Thy robe of richest blessings o'er a curse
All baneful as an earthquake, on whose brink
A thousand crowded cities moulder down
In rapid desolation. Sure the tongue—
The harp of angel hovering in mid air—
Lamenting o'er a lost and ruin'd world,
First whispered thee in heavenly strains to man.

Where are the champions that should now come forth
To succour this great cause? Where are the men
Who term themselves the Ministers of Grace
And delegates of the Most High? Oh where
Hath all that holy patriotism gone,
That pealed its thunders through the house of prayer,
—The sanctuary of peace—the ark of rest—
Where the dove brings the olive branch to man?

What changes hast thou wrought! What wonders done!
What guilt curtailed! What misery withdrawn!
What Peace, and Love, and Virtue shed around,
Thou most diffusive blessing dropped from heaven
In mercy to mankind! Th' Almighty's hand
Is seen outstretched to succour. Have not means
To cherish and promote thee, glorious end,
Even from the bosom of impediments,
Been gathered with success? The drunkard, late,
All madly reeling o'er his midnight bowl,

And grimly plotting deeds of dark revenge—
Even murder glancing from his haggard eye—
Is now transformed, and anxious to impart
Th' experienced good to others. Some before
Look'd on him as a reptile they should spurn:
But now he, dauntlessly, can measure looks—
Can with compassion gentle meet their scorn,
And—true philanthropist—can preach to them
What preachers tremble and turn pale to hear.

Hosts may arraign thee, foes of virtue scowl,
And seem to scatter darkness round thy head;
But these shall mar not, nor the gates of hell
Prevail against thee, glorious child of heaven!
These in time's changing hand shall yet become
Thy brightest halo: they who strive to hide
Their serpent's slough, and war with thee, and say,
"We fight—we fight the battle of the Lord,"
From their high places, soon, of pride and power—
Must fall and wither—widening the domain,
Ebriety has won from Belial's sway.

Let him not make pretension to the name
Of Christian—lover of his kind—who sees
Inebriation stalk like monster foul
O'er earth, treading its sweetest flowers to dust,
And spreading desolation all around,
Yet will not rise to quell the invading foe,
And save a sinking world. Go to that God
Ye worship: ask if 'tis an idle dream—
An airy speculation—and a stain
And stigma upon duty—to essay

Each art and just expedient that may win
One single victim back to hope. Let none
Look coldly on as if they knew not how
To act; but least the man who has assumed
The priestly robe—the sacerdotal stole—
Emblem of holiness—livery of Heaven.

Resist no longer the full blaze of truth
That bursts upon you—if your hearts would tell.
Walk in a way where darkness cannot come—
Where Heaven hath planted all its beams of light
That none may stumble. This in mercy do;
Else, ye wine-bibbers, God will visit you.

EPIGRAM

ON EDWARD GRUBB, ESQ., THE CELEBRATED TEE-TOTAL LECTURER.

Oh Eloquence! are ye grown fey,
And, drawing near your deein' day,
To throw sweet names in Discord's dub,
Yet place at your richt-haun—Ned Grubb?
Oh what a name is this, to be
Allied to heavenly harmony!
Drown dulcet Brougham's in a tub,
Since eloquence is joined to Grubb.

FRIENDSHIP.

[This Poem was written while the Author was superintending the publication of his Second Edition at Glasgow, and dedicated to Mr WILLIAM MACKISON, a gentleman to whose friendship he was greatly indebted, and who is now Captain of the Dundee Police.]

I've tried the charms of poesy—
I've tried the charms of wine;
But friendship is a holier tie
Than both—when both combine.
Not the vague friendship of light minds
Which only life in wassail finds,
And with the goblet's flavour dies;
Which may—or may not—be again
Rekindled in the heated brain,
When reason spreads her wing and flies.

Not theirs, whose friendship—all of clay—
Hath not a spark of fire—
Formed out of Mammon's dust, which they
Had raked from many a mire;
'Tis thine, Intelligence! that beams,
And, undisguised, *is* what it seems—
A ray of Nature's holiest light!
Angelic potency its dower,
To halo Academic bower
Or gild Creation's mental night.

Such friendship felt the Hebrew pair,*
The rivals of a crown;—

* David and Jonathan

Yet idol self could claim no share
In its unmatched renown,
So purified and so sublime,
It sheds its light on distant time,
To vivify a callous world ;
And raised its own rich monument
Of song—whose beauty will augment
As riper Virtue is unfurled.

What was that friendship ? All unfit
Are accents of the earth,
With time's accumulated wit,
Such love to shadow forth :
The mingling of fond hearts and free
Can all its attributes define ;
'Twas a communion of such cast,
As love of womankind surpassed—
Dominion—glory—wealth and wine.

STANZAS ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.

Morn, swathed in ruddy gold, and gaily crowned
With shapes fantastic, leaves the eastern main ;
Day beams with wonted loveliness around
The proud and princely cities of the plain ;
Soft, dewy twilight comes,—and comes the sound
Of mirth, and song, and revelry again;
The wine cup sparkles, and th' abhorred embrace
Of man with man again pollutes th' accursed place,

But ye shall be from your wild revels driven,
Admah, Zeboim, Sodom and Gomorrah!
With what blood-chilling dread your hearts were riven,
Could ye a faint glance from the future borrow,
And see the red flood, from indignant Heaven
Hung out, to burst upon you ere the morrow;—
Are there no visible portents on high.
Or howling in your streets, to tell of havoc nigh?

Ye princes, weep! break, potentates, the rod
Of your ungodly sway! full soon shall wane
Your lowering glories, deep as ruin trod,—
All drenched to dust in heaven's sulphureous rain.
Descended are the seraphims of God,
In wrath, to punish: intercessions vain
The Patriarch plies, and still again entreats
For you, whose final hour of mercy onward fleets.

Unbridled lewdness, robbery, and wrong,
Fraud and foul incest, hasten the dread doom;
The obscene morris and lascivious song
Shall sleep with those that framed them—in one tomb.
The hour wings on,—fate lowers yon clouds among,
Sublime, and big with woe. Oh, God, 'tis come!
Earth opes her sulph'rous womb—huge firebolts play—
Towns crash and melt to dust—four kingdoms pass away!*

Thousands on thousands rush from street to street,
But meet grim ruin wheresoe'er they turn:
Some to the temples of their gods retreat,
And proffer vows, and prayers, and incense burn;

* The reader is requested to remember, that the four cities which were destroyed, were four petty monarchies.

Others die sweetly, swathed in bridal sheet,
  Dreaming of joys awaiting them at morn;
And down the chasms of the opening earth,
Some, flushed with wine, descend in merriment and mirth!

And some, by whirlwind's fury tossed and torn,
  Seem struggling hard for life, but strive in vain;
While others, lingering low, with age outworn,
  Yield up their fainting spirits without pain:
All earthly ties are sundered: brothers mourn
  No brother's fate; sires reel, with swimming brain,
Past their unheeded offspring; friend flies friend;—
Remorse and terror reign, and ruin without end!

No sound uprises on the sulphury gale,
  Save the gorged earthquake, mutt'ring lone and dire;
The voice of gladness and the wild death-wail
  Are hushed in one wide hurricane of fire!
Nought that e'er breathed survives to tell the tale:
  No living thing but shall in dread retire,
Ye cities, from your stench,—where bloated waves
Roll, monuments of woe, dark rising o'er your graves!

A sea delightless, wrapt in putrid gloom,
  Dark rocks, and hills volcanic* mark the scene,
Where once the Cities stood in youthful bloom,
  And stately towers 'mid landscapes smiling green:

---

* The late Dr Clarke, in his recent travels through Palestine, mentions that he discovered a mountain, on the western shores of the Dead Sea, resembling, in its form, the cone of Vesuvius, and having also a crater on the top, which was plainly discernible.

Ye guilty nations, tremble o'er their tomb,—
Heap dust upon your heads, and cry—Unclean!
If these dared heaven, dread ye the unequal war—
Ye that are stained with crimes, more deep, more num'rous far!

THE WRECKED MARINER.

[The illustrious Editor of Blackwood's Magazine—Professor Wilson—in a notice given in that publication of Wright's first Edition of Poems, says, in reference to the following verses;—"One of John's pieces we have committed to memory, or rather, without trying to do so, got by heart: it seems to us very mild and touching."]

Stay, proud bird of the shore!
Carry my last breath with thee to the cliff,
Where waits our shattered skiff
One that shall mark nor it nor lover more.

Fan, with thy plumage bright,
Her heaving heart to rest, as thou dost mine:
And, gently to divine
The tearful tale, flap out her beacon light.

Again swoop out to sea,
With lone and lingering wail,—then lay thy head,
As thou thyself wert dead,
Upon her breast, that she may weep for me.

Now, let her bid false Hope
For ever hide her beam, nor trust again
The peace-bereaving strain,—
Life has, but still far hence, choice flowers to crop.

Oh! bid not her repine,
And deem my loss too bitter to be borne,
Yet all of passion scorn,
But the mild, deepening memory of mine.

Thou art away! sweet wind!
Bear the last trick'ling tear-drop on thy wing,
And o'er her bosom fling
The love-fraught pearly shower, till rest it find!

AN AUTUMNAL CLOUD.

[This is—in the opinion of the Bard—one of the loftiest flights of his genius, and the Poem is cherished by him with all the fondness which a mother would lavish on a favourite child. It was composed on a beautiful autumn eve, as the Poet—his mind wrapt in the robes of fancy—wandered along the banks of the "woody Burnawn," near his native village. Critics have characterised it as being the mightiest effort of his mind: one of the most distinguished of the literati of the present day, even pronounced it equal to Burns's "Had I a Cave."]

Oh! would I were throned on yon glossy, golden cloud,
Soaring to heaven with the eagle so proud,—
Floating o'er the sky
Like a spirit, to descry
Each bright realm,—and, when I die,
May it be my shroud!

I would skim afar o'er ocean, and drink of bliss my fill,
O'er the thunders of Ni'gara and cataracts of Nile,—
With rising rainbows wreathed,
In mists and darkness sheathed,
Where nought but spirits breathed
Around me the while.

Above the mighty Alps (o'er the tempest's angry god
Careering on the avalanche) should be my blessed abode.
There, where Nature lowers more wild
Than her most uncultured child,
Revels Beauty—as one smiled
O'er life's darkest mood.

Our aërial flight should be where eye hath never been,
O'er the stormy Polar deep, where the icy Alps are seen,—
Where Death sits, crested high,
As he would invade the sky,
Whilst the living vallies lie
In their beautiful green!

Spirit of the peaceful autumnal eve!
Child of enchantment! behind thee leave
Thy semblance mantled o'er me!—
Too full thy tide of glory
For fancy to restore thee
Or memory give!

THE BATTLE OF PENTLAND HILLS.

[The Pentlands are a range of fine pastoral hills, and are situate in the counties of Peebles and Mid-Lothian. The tops of some of the mountains forming the range have an altitude varying from 1,600 to 1,800 feet above the level of the sea. The scenery of the hills is beautiful. The Scottish Presbyterians, smarting under the indignities inflicted on them by the Earl of Lauderdale and his colleagues in the then administration, (1666) took up arms, and after accomplishing a few unimportant victories, marched upon Edinburgh, where they expected to be joined by the citizens in making a struggle for their rights. They were however disappointed in this, and their original number, amounting to 2,000, dwindled down to a few hundreds, and these were half famished from want of provisions. General Dalzell attacked them on their retreat homewards,—the conflict taking place near Pentland-hills,—when 40 were killed and 130 taken prisoners. Of these 45 were executed, and among them the Rev. Hew M'Kail, one of Scotland's noblest martyrs, whose piety and zeal in the cause of his Maker, as well as his heroic fortitude in the hour of death, have hallowed his memory, and rendered it dear to every lover of religious liberty.]

Shall that dread hour of glory—
Till Time himself grow hoary—
Ignobly die in story
Or in a Briton's ear:
That hour with horror spangled,
When Liberty lay mangled,
Her votaries entangled
On Pentland mountains drear?

A faithful few, unbending,
To deathful storms impending,
Were seen those heights ascending,
At early watch of morn,

Pursued—but yet unfearing—
They sung their songs endearing,
While a bloody foe appearing,
Laughed the heavenly sounds to scorn.

For Liberty they had striven,
In the open face of Heaven:
Afar, 'mongst deserts driven,
Their front defiance wore.
On the heaths above Dunedin,
Soon that patriot band lay bleeding,
And the carrion, foul, were feeding
Their young with Martyrs' gore.

But while their hands were wielding
The spear, their hearts were building
On prayer—hope—faith—unyielding
To the myrmidons of crime:
By a hell-let-loose of Nero's,
Whose names like simooms scar us,
Were massacred the heroes
Of the Covenant, sublime.

Then songs of mountain gladness
Were changed to strains of sadness;
While havoc, in its madness,
Wrought all around despair;
Hope seemed for ever blighted—
Sweet mercy fled affrighted—
From blackest fiends united,
Tormenting earth and air.

But the sword of justice glancing,
Came in the rear advancing,
Heaven's armoury elancing
Its rays of dreadful sheen :
Then came vindictive Ruin—
A monarchy undoing—
That long had been imbruing
In blood its hands unclean.

Then dawned the golden season,
Of Liberty and Reason—
The hated name of treason,
Stamp'd no more on Faiths was seen ;
The Muses from Aonia,
Sought out sweet Caledonia,
And mists of Pandemonia,
Dispersed from thence bedeen.

Then smiled each peaceful village—
No more given o'er to pillage—
Then flourished trade and tillage—
Every blessing we adore :
Be hallowed and defended,
The sceptre that's extended,
The monarch that ascended
To gladden Albion's shore.

ON THE DEPARTURE

OF THE

REV. JOHN BARCLAY, CATRINE,

TO A PASTORAL CHARGE IN UPPER CANADA.

—

Away thou young Apostle to the land
That needs thy mission, fair Columbia's strand!
Bright be thy evangelical career—
Heaven speed thee, Barclay, in thy future sphere!
On earth's far confines boldly to proclaim,
Justice, and mercy, and a Saviour's name,
Till knowledge of the Godhead's workings be
Spread far o'er earth, as waters fill the sea;
And nations all in Gospel peace become
One family, in full millenial bloom.

Go set the desert's darkened offspring free:
In solitary places of the sea,
Uprear the standard of eternal truth; —
Great be thy harvest,—enterprising youth!
Tell those whom nought but earthly objects move,
Of all the wonders of Redeeming Love—
Heaven, Hell, Eternity, and fleeting Time,
And Mercy seated on the bow sublime,
To light up lowering vengeance to a smile,
Till Justice drops a tear in Mercy's style.

Tell those who deep through Nature's pages look,
Yet shun the pages of the Sacred Book,
Bliss may be found 'mongst peaceful solitudes,
Clear running waters, and the desert woods—
May be the visitant of bright abodes,
By rapture fashioned for the seats of Gods—

And, in the ray of fancy, may be seen
Her fairy gambols on the cottage green:
Yet is her home by Faith's inspiring stream;
She rests her wing within the Scripture beam.

There be who dream of universal woe
And feel no ray of gladness: let them know
This world's not all delightless, void and dark,
Where feeble joy scarce sheds a transient spark:
Where man walks sad by day, and lays his head
At night on sorrow's uninviting bed.—
Flowers turn not all to ashes in our grasp;
All are not shades and phantoms that we clasp;
Charms all around entrance the cherished soul,
With Gospel comforts to enrich the whole.

* * * * * * * *

The task is arduous to reclaim mankind
From prejudice and error; some we find
Who Heaven's eternal purposes disclaim,
And brand election as an idle name!
Who owns a God, must own that power to be,
Himself past, present, future;—Deity
Omniscient, therefore, who himself must know—
Eternities from out his being flow;—
He therefore is eternal, so must all
He ever purposed be; no shadows fall
In rear of his omniscience, or in van,
To mar a purpose, or destroy a plan;
No back ground hid from view—nought lies behind
The vision of the uncreated mind.

Dark unbelief, that in our favoured Isle,
Hath scooped her den, and lived, and wrought turmoil,

Shall meet thee at Toronto: and display
Her pall of clouds to hide the rising day;
For, wheresoe'er a Christian church is seen,
The monster Infidelity hath been;
Yea, striven with hell-born artifice, to throw,
Discord and doubt o'er all, and death and woe.
The dove sent from the Ark, that found no spot
To rest her foot on, types the sceptic's lot;
He hath no eyesight, and is worse than blind;
A tiny nutshell holds his little mind;
Dark hate is all the woof with which he weaves
His web of life, who of all hope bereaves
The downcast soul,—yet cannot in its room
Leave one faint rush-light peep to cheer the gloom.

Some you will find who perish as they live,
Regardless of the future, yet believe:
Go to their death-bed, ask what chart's to guide
Their feet through Jordan, to the heavenly side.
Few were their faults, they tell, of import light,
And God is merciful, and all is right:
O Sin, that nailed up Jesus! be thy power
Resisted to blood-striving since that hour:
Leave earth, fair earth, foul enemy of God,
In Hades' depths lift thy rebellious rod.

Far from the windings of thy native Ayr,
Themes such as these shall be thy constant care;—
To win the soul from sin's entangling mesh,
Till hearts of stone be changed to hearts of flesh:
Like oil poured forth to calm the stormy main,
Let words of peace the passions all restrain;
Like dew-clouds dropping on the thirsty soil,
So may thy care of souls in Christ requite thy toil.

THE BLUE DEVILS.

[This poem, inscribed to an intimate acquaintance, and genuine well-wisher of the Bard, (Mr JAMES QUIGLEY, Reporter for the "Ayr Observer,") was written after a long debauch, and when the Poet was enduring all the poignancy and horror of what he designates the "Blues." It is a real, and not an imaginary picture, and faithfully pourtrays the torture of mind which he experienced while the attack of DELIRIUM TREMENS continued. Not unfrequently during these aberrations has the poet, in the silent hour of midnight, betaken himself to the "gurgling Ayr" to bathe his burning temples in its limpid waters. On one occasion, in particular, he went to the Fort Green, adjacent to the harbour of Ayr; and, although it rained heavily at the time, he lay down upon his back, expecting that here, at least, he would be relieved from the interference of the noisy imps who marred his repose. The night was exceedingly dark. He had not remained long extended upon the grass, before a mimic Pandemonium presented itself to his heated imagination: and he gravely declares that the largest of the fiendish multitude, whom he supposed to be Old Nick himself, seemed very anxious to take him captive. Although he had not a "grey mare Meg" to effect his escape from the "hellish legion" yet we are positively assured that his retreat almost equalled that of Tam o' Shanter himself.]

Now that I have, at last, got out of drink,
  After four moons of Bacchanalian glee,
Grave, sober, wisely, let me sit and think,
  And, dearest QUIGLEY, pen a line to thee.
I reck not whether it be prose or clink,
  Poetic dreams are all withdrawn from me;
The only inspiration of the Muse
Is deep hell-burning—in ten thousand Blues!

Terrific fiends! I'd rather meet a score
  Of Tartars fierce, than in their clutches be;
They pinch and probe, and threaten with loud roar,
  To throw their hapless victim in the sea!—

Frighten with hideous oaths, that ne'er before
Were uttered out of Tophet—they that dree
Such dreadful terrors here, have felt the fire
That is unquenched, and death is their desire.

By day they haunt you—thundering forth their jests
That keep the heart in agonizing pine;
No getting rid of such unwelcome guests—
Close by your side they lie when you recline.
You hear the very beating of their breasts,
Till your own heart its functions would resign;
And when you strive to rest the weary head,
They whisper—"Tear the ——— out of bed!"

A dozen voices will bawl out at once—
"We'll never let the Poet sleep again!"
Another cries—"No Poet, but a dunce,
These twenty years, that's rack'd a barren brain!"
Then all with one accord upon you pounce,
And reason's weak resistance comes in vain;
Though well aware no sorcery is there,
You roar outright, and shake, with stiffened hair!

But hearing is a heaven to what you feel,
When they appear before the startled sight—
When reason becomes madness, as they reel
And grin around you through the long dark night.
Such grisly forms no limner might reveal,
Though all e'er penciled could in one unite;
Unheard of shapes, creation never saw—
Such as would make even Satan stand in awe!

Thus thousands suffer from life's bitter foe —
  Strong drink—delusive parent of all ill!
Sin ne'er contrived on earth a deadlier wo—
  What prey, what precious spoil, his altars fill!
Oh, man's worst vampire! thy swoll'n features glow
  With blood—profusely shed, and drunk at will;
Plagues, death, and devils drive their wish, when we
Become enamoured of the "barley bree."

Toads, serpents, vipers—all foul things combined
  And blent in one—would injure less than thee,
Cursed alcohol!—a devil now defined,
  By all who reason, and have eyes to see;
Ruin of hope! wreck of superior mind!—
  More fatal far than Java's poison tree;
Down from her seat thou hast man's glory driven—
Even Reason's self, the noblest gift of Heaven.

But there is one shall triumph, and shall shine,
  And break down Belial's sway with sovereign rod;
Hail! holy, heavenly Temperance benign!
  That paves the way to happiness and God:
How beautiful thy influence divine,
  Subduing sorrow in its dark abode;—
The flushed wine-god is falling to the ground,
And thou, oh Temperance! gives the mortal wound.

May high enlightenment and mercy work—
  O'er every land ebriety be laureled—
Till nations all behold the sacred ark
  Of Temperance, whose standard is unfurled,

To save from damning whisky's deluge dark
A ruined race of men—a drowning world;
And may they be by conscience whipt, who throw
Abuse on those who strive to root out woe.

Ye youths, take warning while ye yet are free,
The false allurements of the bowl gainsay;
Resist temptation, lest ye come to dree
Disease and want—Blue Devils night and day;
Oh thou, my dearest friend, bestow on me
A portion of thy spirit—that I may
Be temperate, wise, and sing o'er earth abroad,
The harmony of nature and of God.

WITCH OF ENDOR.

SAUL.

Enchantress! thy power I come to implore;
The gold in this hand's but the earnest of more,
If from death's dismal monarchy, mouldering and cold,
Before us you bring whom we come to behold.

WITCH.

Though what thou would'st have me I were, thou must know
From loathed divination what miseries flow;
Were 't known I had practised aught friendly for thee,
'Twere woe to thyself, but red ruin to me.

SAUL.

Earth, towering shall kiss out the stars: the fallen stream
Backward roll—be ice-bound by the sun's sultry beam;
The steep mountain, wrapped in sterility's gloom,
Change at once to a valley of beauty and bloom,
Ere for this aught befall thee of peril or pain,—
As lives the Eternal, I swear it again!

WITCH.

The mists of mortality fall from my eyes,
Pervading (as thine, at a glance yonder skies)
This world's far bottom. The spell is prepared
And the rod that would mock earth's joint potency reared,
Nay, your treasures withhold till that power I display!
Now, would our destroyers come down on their prey,
These eyes to devour 'em in death and despair,
My breath would blow, Saul, like burst bubble in air!
Now, whatever you name shall arise, (and more soon
Than uttered,) of all ever breathed 'neath the moon.

SAUL.

Urned in Ramah, our prophet; but, woman, beware
Of defeating fond hope with a mockery of air:
Why startle and shriek, with a loud beating heart?

WITCH.

Thou may'st not deceive me disguised, as thou art:
If blameless I live not, ask, monarch! of Heaven,
Nor enchantment have wrought since thy mandate was given.

SAUL.

That reck not, remember my vow! What appears
Thus terrible to thee as waken *thy* fears?

WITCH.

A god, out of earth's opening bowels, ascends,
And, lo! towards Endor indignantly wends—
Close mantled in form of a sage.

SAUL.

It is he!
My soul, what dark surges are rising in thee!
How I shrink from his frown!—sink him down from my sight!—
Ha! sorceress! he comes! of thy power in despite.
I will fly—at that look all my hopes are laid low:
Oh God! were I yet in the gleam of the foe!
My servants, stand by me,—thou, sorceress! retire.
Hail, *(bowing to earth,)* Israel's Prophet and Sire!

SAMUEL.

From the far heights of glory—eternal repose—
Why conjure me back to this desert of woes?
Why am I breathing this world's foul bane,
And trembling twofold 'neath life's burden again?
What would'st thou with whom thou hast dragged from the dead,—
Thou, who upon life all its bitterness shed?

SAUL.

From the deep of despair, in its wildest uproar,
Convey me, oh sire! to Hope's halcyon-shore.
The legions of Palestine, spread o'er the land,
Ne'er dared us to battle so dreadful a band:
And neither by prophet, by Urim, nor dream,
Have we, oh, father! yet gathered a gleam
Of faint firing hope; fell presages appear
(Discomfiture, vassalage, roll in their rear!)
From earth's muttering womb, from the wave on the shore
To the cloud in the sky, red with Israel's gore!
Hie we to the lowly cot, sorrow hath there
Spread her pall, the proud dome yet more dark with despair!
The warrior's heart fails in their ominous ray,
And the prowess of Judah hath melted away!

SAMUEL.

If thus thou'rt forsaken, why call upon me?
Ah! of thee *that foretold* now accomplished I see
The sceptre of power to another is given,—
Thou to ruin thrust down by the fire-bolt of heaven.—
That vengeance thou left'st on cursed Am'lek unpoured.
On thyself, fallen monarch! infuriately showered.
To-morrow, thy troops are or scattered or slain,
But the remnant thou never shalt rally again;
And the blood of thy children—outblotting thy line—
Shall stream to the valley, and mingle with thine.

To earth, as a cedar o'erset by the storm,
Fell prostrate the monarch of Israel's form;
And his eyelid in death seemed for ever to close,
While the prophet retired to his broken repose.

AN ODD CHARACTER.

[The talented Author of "The Contemporaries of Burns," says,—in a short sketch of the life of Wright, given in that publication—that the following verses are descriptive of the Poet's own habits and feelings. They are but partly so. Although the effusion bears every indication of its having been written to express his own views of his own character, the peculiarities of those of two of his "bosom cronies" were added to swell the aggregate of eccentricities pourtrayed. The poem is considered, by competent judges, a finished piece of description; but by no means should it be viewed as embodying the exclusive features of Wright's general character, although those the most prominent are faithfully delineated.]

A WAYWARD youth, of vague and varying moods,
And strong, though checked propensities, I sing:
One who could woo the Muse by streams and woods,
Or make her drunken at unhallowed spring,—
One who could carol on the thundery clouds
The song of Hope, or soar on Doubt's dark wing:—
All men mistook him, reck'ning at first glance
He was an easy and good-natured dunce!

Ay, they were much mistaken,—for he threw
Simplicity around him as a veil,
Whereby the working of men's minds he knew,—
Himself unknown; they reck'd not to inhale
So dull a spirit; and there were but few
Who otherwise beheld him: he seemed stale
And spiritless in gesture, speech, and feature,—
A heartless, harmless, good-for-nothing creature.

His spirit ceased at times—though to none known—
To be itself; for he had grown ideal
In almost all things he did look upon,
Touch, taste, or hear; and objects most unreal
Received from him more bulk of blood and bone
Than would with witch-lore even at times agree well;—
The brown leaf, rustling forth its evening sigh,
Shook him all o'er, as if a god rushed by!

The multitude he loved not, though at times
He stood among them in their noisy mirth,
And seemed to laugh at their loud-boasted crimes,
And drained the goblet round their tasteless hearth;
Yet was he weary of them; and as climbs
The clay-clogged butterfly from miry earth
To bask on beaming flowers, so he, disgusted,
Left the dark scene where long his soul had rusted.

Love he had felt,—but let it pass away;
Because on woman though he doated much,
He felt his spirit could not bear the sway
Of making e'er such slender reed his crutch:
Though he had heard of happiness this way,
He dreaded deeply the connubial clutch;
O'er him, withal, did Love much power retain,
Back from the clanking of his iron chain.

He, too, had friends, but kept them not; they were
—Except in absence, without letter-writing—
A burthen he had tried, but could not bear,—
The pain of being invited and inviting!

Casual if met, he joyed, no matter where,
But closer friendship soon became affrighting.
'Twas torture to be to night-parties led,
When he would have an hour or two in bed!

Round his own lovely village centered all
His loves, his hopes, and wishes, till he found
His cup of bliss there filled with burning gall,
By Envy's squinting horde, that gathered round,
And o'er his path of fame did foully crawl,
Like hissing adders, when his hopes were crowned:
His Muse they tried to blight,—but she unmarr'd—
They fell to work upon himself, the Bard!

And greedily you might have found them gleaning
Tones inarticulate—misapprehended;
Looks were construed to an ill-favoured meaning,
And all his movements in one black cloud blended;
And now his scorn was reckoned pride o'erweening,—
An empty foam, to its wave-top ascended;—
Yet though such hordes upon his fame made pillage,
There were good kindred fellows in the village.

* * * * *

And these were friends of his—his very brothers—
Who wished him well, as all the village knows;
But, if I could remember, there were others
Alike inclined to cherish his repose,—
Although at times he found them like fond mothers,
That show their love to children by sound blows;
They drew the sword, and stabbed—the bow, and shot him—
But then, true love was (God knows) at the bottom.

It may be that I may advert elsewhere
To these his friends, and haply paint 'em better;
But he, all independence, could not bear
His mind with Friendship's epithets to fetter:
From dread dun's eye he saw a demon glare,
And rose to pounds by being a pence debtor:
His hand was turned against all men, through whim,
And every man's was lifted against him!

His was the hand of scorn,—not power: mankind,
In ordinary cases, found him civil;
But, once awaked, they shrunk aghast to find,
A spirit rise that would browbeat the devil;
His heart was warm, and vain, and oft would wind
Around him flattery from a common drivel:
His brow was wrinkled, and his young scalp hoary,
Twice ten years ere his time, through love of glory.

He, too, was jealous—Jealousy's first-born!
Jealous of all men, jealous in all places;
All night of desperadoes dreamt,—at morn,
He saw a snare lurk in most priestly faces:
One dubious look or accent made him lorn,
Till love or friendship lost their winning graces,—
And at such times, the wafture of a hand
Told on his spirit like a hell-fire brand!

Yet was he not much fitted, as you'll see,
To be in deep woods a lone eremite;
Even then he was not from forebodings free—
Annoyed to death by kelpy, ghost, and sprite:

Yet only from such shadows would he flee,—
Bold could he lift his brawny arm in fight;
So bold, had bodied spirit dared him then,
He would have beat it into air again.

Though forests, and deep glens, and mountain streams,
And high o'erhanging cliffs, and caverns drear,
Formed the first rainbow of his youthful dreams,
—That o'er him hung for ever, fresh and clear,—
Yet solitude, though wrapt in noonday beams,
Without some cottage or companion near,
He trembled to approach. Why is it so,
That cherished feeling e'er should end in woe!

Thus was this youth the comet of his kind,
A dancing streamer,—wand'ring Will-o'-wisp;
The rusty ties of men could never bind
His free and daring spirit in their grasp;
The common path he left, if he might find
A by-way near, some random Muse to clasp.
Reader! this youth's no phantom of the brain:
He is not dead, but sleeps—to rise again.

TO MY FIRST-BORN CHILD.

[The following verses appeared in the Second Edition of Wright's poems, but in a different, and rather questionable shape. The Author, however, has been prevailed upon to remodel their structure so as render them less offensive to the refined ear. "The evil power" which has "crossed his father's path," has prevented him hitherto from using the means, which he so feelingly describes, for the culture of his child's mind. Misfortune has deprived the boy of "a sire's sustaining care," but "a mother's fond affection" supplies the want. Thoughts of his children often occupy the Poet's mind, accompanied by the keen regrets which a separation from all that dear on earth conspires to engender.]

THE breath of life, my child!
Distends thy nostrils; and the restless flame
Runs quiv'ring through thy frame,
Of thy sire's spirit, fitfully and wild.

And thou hast now become
The denizen of a world so woe-begone,—
Thou'lt feel its cares anon,
And ne'er know freedom, though born free to roam.

* * * * * * * * *

Many a long weary hour
Of grief, despair, dejection, may be thine,
When thou would'st glad resign,
With all its transient sweets, life's bitter dow'r.

But Hope shall lead thee on
To bowers of bliss, still fair though far away,
Whose rapture-beaming ray
Shall gild existence, even when manhood's gone.

Oh! may the evil power,
That crossed thy father's path like simoom wild,
And many a sweet hope soiled,
Ne'er blind thine eye with tears, nor o'er thee lour!

I would not have thee be
The child of Song: who courts this art divine
Is left on earth to pine,
Like skiff too far out on a stormy sea.

Yet will I cherish fond
In thee the power and spirit of the Muse,—
Imaginary views
Of man and nature, common reach beyond.

To scenes of grandeur I
Will lead thee, and familiarize thy mind
With all that we may find
On Alpine heights, beneath a summer sky:—

Where round the rocks is seen,
Like Beauty rip'ning in the embrace of Death,
In many a massy wreath,
The fresh young ivy intertwining green:—

Where Spring, in all the glow
Of beautiful divinity, looks down
From cliffs, with leafy crown
And green attire, on Autumn stretched below!

Thou emblem of thy God!
Yet innocent, whom we do love I ween,
As thou hadst with us been
Long years already on life's thorny road.

* * * * * * *

A sire's sustaining care—
A mother's fond affection shall be thine,
That round thee close shall twine,
And share thy joys, and shield thee from despair.

The annals of the seer,
Who sung creation starting into light
From never-broken night,
Shall early greet thy little infant ear:

And thoughts all bright—the stream
Of rapture that pervades the sacred page—
Shall thy young heart engage,
Where beauty, pathos, heavenly grandeur beams!

And when, my lovely child!
The season thou hast reached to mix with men,
Sporting by hill and glen,
O'erhanging cliffs, and precipices wild:—

When thou hast reached thy prime,
And felt the magic power of woman's eye,
Begin not then to try
To ease the heart, song-making and sweet rhyme:

'Twill steal thee, in the end,
Away from happiest love, to woo wild fame,
Where thou may'st blight thy name,
And reap no good but what to ill may tend.

Thus fell the Peasant Bard,
Coila's sweet minstrel, to whom did belong
A stream of richer song
Than India's strand or Eden's living sward!

As mists of evening, curled
In many a shape of bliss o'er mountain gray,
Was his bewitching lay,
Whose home's each heart—whose cenotaph's the world.

ODD-FELLOWSHIP.

INSCRIBED TO THE "LOYAL BANKS OF AYR LODGE."

[Odd-Fellowship, now almost universally spread over the land, made its first appearance in Ayr in 1841. After much importunity a few individuals were induced to have themselves initiated into the Order. Notwithstanding the title of the fraternity is rather singular, and, we may add, unhappily chosen,—the charitable and philanthropic principles which distinguish this Society above all others, soon found Patrons; and the Lodge, which was instituted, on 17th May in the above year, now numbers upwards of 210 members, with a very respectable fund for the relief of the sick or the distressed belonging to the brotherhood. The Poet, though not an Odd-Fellow in the sense described below, was keenly alive to the importance and advantages of the institution; hence the following verses.]

Hail! glorious Institution, hail!
Thou'rt like a ship just setting sail,
Blest with calm sky and prosp'rous gale,
On summer sea—
O may'st thou never, never fail,
But 'stablished be.

Hail! brethren of the "Banks of Ayr"
Odd Fellows but in name, nae mair;
Unlike those Bacchanals that bear
That appellation—
Masked, rampant fiends, whose red eyes glare
O'er deep potation.

But Temp'rance is your fixed degree,
High order, love, and harmony;
An Institution that shall see
No rival ne'er:
The honour of humanity
And virtue dear.

Is competence an acquisition?
Is your deep prayer and warm petition
Ne'er to come in dire collision
With meagre want?
Come hither;—if ye find admission
Ye've cause to vaunt.

Ye who contrived such good for man,
Ye noble Howards in the van—
Executors of mercy's plan—
Bright be your fame!
While bitter spite, that would trepan,
Is brought to shame.

Most glorious union of Odd Fellows!
Whae'er blaws slander's horn to tell us
Ye're come wi' politics to spoil us
And hunt down truth,
Is owre lang frae the hulks or gallows—
Deil stop his mouth!

Here peace presides, the soul and centre
Of the communion; nor dare enter
Fierce party squabbles, the tormentor
And wreck of all;
That even into the Kirk will venture,
With lips of gall.

O for a whip and power to lash
The demon that first raised a clash;
That works o'er earth sic wide stramash,
Grief and despair,
And would break down with thund'ring crash
This fabric fair.

Ye bats that flutter in the gloom,
Ye moles that riddle nature's womb,
In dark assemblage bent to doom
Our lights away,
And Institutions that shall bloom
Above your clay.

Bright Brotherhood! ne'er nurse disorder,
Of noblest plans the sure retarder;
Nae blessing e'er cam owre the Border
Like your grand scheme:
Enlightened wisdom be its warder
Down time's rough stream.

May stunted shrubs that bear no fruit
Ne'er in this garden fair take root,
Nor idle weeds that love to shoot
From richest soil,
And mongst the sweetest plants that sprout,
Work sad turmoil.

While Ailsa Craig sits on the deep,
While Goatfell rises stern and steep,
While tides roll on, and billows sweep,
The shores of Kyle,
Sae lang may ye high station keep,
And, thriving, smile!

LINES ON THE GLASGOW ODD FELLOWS' VISIT TO THE "LAND OF BURNS."

[On the fifteenth of July 1842, the Odd-Fellows belonging to the several Lodges in Glasgow, to the number of nearly 1000, paid a visit to Ayr and the "Land of Burns." They came from Glasgow by a special train, and having met their brethren from the Ayr, Kilmarnock and Troon Lodges, the whole body marched out to the Monument in procession. The spectacle was of the most imposing character. The following was written about a fortnight prior to the event it alludes to.]

Bright band of Brothers from the Clyde!
Renowned Odd-Fellows, far and wide,
On *Spitfire's* back away ye glide,
Wi' social glee,
The land of song, in summer's pride,
Right fain to see.

To meet your gallant Brethren there,
The Branch Lodge of The Banks of Ayr;
Boys that possess, and winna spare,
The yellow treasure,
Who will provide, with treatment rare,
For your high pleasure.

Odd-Fellowship—guid o' itsel—
Conceived in love, born to excel;
That o'er a' unions bears the bell,
Throughout the nation,
Seems doubly dear from this grand spell
Of visitation.

From Cart to Doon let memory
Hoard up the lovely sights ye see;
O'ermantled with the poesy,
And music strong,
Of Burns and Tannahill, that be
The gods of song.

Yours is a glorious route to-day,
Befitting such a grand display;
By Wallace' birth-place—Elderslie;
And where each hill
Heard famous Habby Simpson play
His pibroch shrill.

Ride proudly on, ye lads of mettle,
Bid fire-horse fume, and carriage brattle;
And let nae cares your hearts unsettle,
At such a season;
Auld Ayr shall boil the toddy kettle,
To weet your wizen.

Guid save's, what speed! the valleys reel,
And mountains, like a spinning wheel;
E'en streams are whirling to the deil,
In backward motion;
And men and cattle seem to feel
The strange commotion.

The Garnock is receding fast—
The bleak Kilbirnie hills are past—
Now 'pear the glories of the West,
Hill, sea, and shore;
And Ailsa—ocean's giant crest—
Uprises hoar.

Kilwinning, the Papingo town,
Held by Montgomerie of renown,
Seems, in the hurry, sinking down
Into the sea,
Whose bowmen Robin Hood might own,
And honoured be.

And now is heard the billows' roar—
And seen the towns that stud the shore—
And felt the sea-breeze more and more,
Exhilarating;
The breeze that pent up cits adore,
Fresh life creating.

As on by Irvine's shores ye haste,
Pay homage to the Earl's taste,
And mark the spot that saw the last
Of chivalry;
Such glorious tilting in the west,
Wha e'er did see?

Dundonald Castle next appears,
O'erladen with the weight of years:
A princely dome, that stoutly bears
Th' attacks of time;
And in its very ruin wears
A look sublime.

And Troon, gemm'd in yon fairy nook,
Upgrown, yet still of infant look,
Well patronised by Portland's Duke,
Its foster sire;
A new creation starts—like brook
From mossy mire.

The woods of Fullarton before ye,
Flash proudly in their summer's glory;
The Powburn—famous in witch-story,
Throughout the land;
And Prestwick—in appearance sorry,
Are close at hand.

Hurrah, my boys!—right merry be,
The point is gained:—ye now may see
The Branch Lodge marching down the Quay—
A goodly throng:
What salutations, toasts and glee,
Ye'll hear ere long!

The blooming, far-famed maids of Ayr,
Shall welcome you in clusters fair:
Provost and Bailies shall be there,
Laymen and priest,
Crowding the streets, in concourse rare,
T' enjoy the feast.

The Wallace Tower ye'll now discover,
Basking in beauty up the river;
The Brigs, whose colloquy time never
Shall try to blot;
As proud as Burns were passing over,
They'll maist speak out.

I needna paint the joys ye'll feel,
When ye gang out to see the biel
Where Burns was born, and sung sae weel:
And by the Kirk,
Where Tam O'Shanter saw the De'il,
And Cutty-Sark.

Were Burns alive, his heart would glow,
To see the charms that art can throw
O'er nature's face—the grand *jet d'eau*,
And grotto fair,
Contrived by AULD, who well can show
Each beauty rare.

I leave you now,—a higher spell
Shall your whole souls with transport swell;
By the Auld Brig, and Mungo's Well,
And Monument,
And may your steam trip, ending well,
Give cause to vaunt.

A NOISY SUBJECT,

WRITTEN IN A MOMENT OF INSPIRATION.

LOUDER BURKE'S cuddy ass doth bray,
Than lion raging for its prey,
Or devils yelling in a fray;
Louder than roar old Ocean's waves,
When storms dig deep the seamen's graves;
Or the wild tempest on the land,
Howling and bearing dread command;
Like some great mob's tremendous squall;
Or bursting mines, when cities fall;
Or Waterloo—what time our Chief
Implored for Prussian relief;
Or frozen masses rumbling down,
From Alpine hills, to crush a town;
Like thunder pealing through the sky;
Or savage's loud battle cry;
Or cannon—at its murderous work—
So roars thy cuddy—JAMIE BURKE.

THE BATTLE OF LANGSIDE.

[On the death of James V. in 1542, his successor—Mary—was but a few hours old. Her beauty, imprudence, and misfortunes are alike famous in history. She was married while yet in her minority to Francis II. of France, during which period the Reformation had made rapid strides in Scotland. On taking possession of the Scottish throne, she married her cousin-german, Darnley, whose untimely fate has given rise to so much controversy. In consequence of the violent death of her husband, and her subsequent marriage with Bothwell—his supposed murderer—an insurrection broke out among her subjects; and although Bothwell made a show of resistance, Mary was compelled to surrender herself to her associated nobles. She was afterwards confined in the castle of Lochleven, whence she made her escape, and was received by a few determined loyalists, who raised an army of 6,000 for her defence. The Regent Murray and his adherents routed Mary's army at Langside, near Glasgow, and the unfortunate Queen was obliged to flee into England, where she was detained 18 years prisoner, and then beheaded, by order of Elizabeth in 1587, in the 46th year of her age.]

QUEEN MARY looked from Cathkin's top,
On Langside's bloody day,
And saw her brave defenders drop
In thousands 'mid the fray;
She saw the rebel's pennon float—
The Royal banner fall—
Then turned her weeping from the spot,
Friends, kingdom, lost was all.

"Oh wae betide thee, Scotland's isle
In grief I e'en must say:
Ye've ne'er deserved a monarch's smile,
Since that disastrous day,

The Regent Murray and his brood
Of emissaries vile,
Dip't their curs'd hands in kindred blood—
The purest of our Isle."

* * * *

No blemish in her life we find
To match her sad o'erthrow;
Her faults were those of womankind—
A mountain's weight her woe.
Let adulation as it will
Deek England's vestal Queen:*
Surveyed from MARY's prison cell
She's but a despot seen.

Time has rolled on—and prejudice
Been hunted from its shade;
And darkling deeds are brought to light—
Their barbarous guilt displayed.
Thy mem'ry—deeply injured one
Still brightens on our view,
And calls for imprecations on
The regicidal crew.

* Elizabeth.

THE BROKEN HEART.

Sad was thy fate, Eliza dear!
It had been well for thee,
The cradle to have been thy bier,
Beside thy mother's knee.
No other child e'er shared her love;
And while thy years were green,
Thy mother's heart true joy did move
That thou had'st girlhood seen.

Alas! she recked not, nor could see
The page of coming years—
The portraiture of agony—
Else blood had been her tears.
Ye rose in bloom the eye to bless,
Like bright bird on the wing,
In all the life and loveliness
That decks the orient spring.

Thine was a look that snared the heart,
And held it to the last;
A face—a form—from which to part,
Rent one from rich repast
An eye, nor blue, nor darkly bright,
Nor grey ye would it call,
But an enchanting aggregate
Admixture of them all.

But these were to thee as fair flowers
Are to the parent spray,
That are, all in their natal hour,
Snatched by rude hands away.
The owl that sweeps the forest through,
In darkness finding prey—
So felon man did all undo
Thy bosom in such way.

Peace fled thee with thy faded fame
And thou—wrecked—passion's slave,
Hid, with thy broken heart, from blame,
In an untimely grave.
Sad was thy fate, Eliza dear!
It had been well for thee,
The cradle to have been thy bier,
Beside thy mother's knee.

BARR CASTLE.

Barr Castle! tenantless and wild!
Dome of delight! dear haunt of mine!
The shock of ages thou hast foiled,
Since fell the last of Lockhart's line;
Thou, left a hermit, to grow gray
O'er swallow, crane, and bird of prey.

Proud edifice! no annals tell
What thou hast brooked, what thou hast been,
Who reared thee in this lovely dell,
What mighty baron,—lord, I ween,

Of hardy Kyle: no bordering tower
Possessed more independent power.

O for a pinion from the wing
Of pelf, to lift me from the mire,
And crown a wish, formed in life's spring,
When life was all desire!
These walls should ring with Minstrel's lay,
These turrets fall not to decay.

On thy broad battlements, moss-wove,
In nature's holy, unbroken hush,
Save by the owl's lone note above,
And the hurrying water's ceaseless gush—
Through all of bliss heaven e'er unfurled,
Oh! then and there the soul is hurled.

The rudely rolling mountain stream,
From thence, (while floating o'er the lea,
The mists melt away in the twilight beam,)
How sweet to hear, how fair to see!
Its every maze we loved to trace,
Of beauty—met in one embrace.

Departing Autumn! oh, thine the hour,
When, far down the vale to the dusky ocean,
The moon sheds her mild beam, the light clouds lour
Or sport through the blue sky in fitful motion,
Of every beautiful form and dye
That love to deck an autumn sky.

But when in fond breathings, seclusion that seek,
Would Love o'er the scene his wild witchery fling,
The zephyr that crept o'er the burning cheek,
Seemed the odorous waft of a seraph's wing;
And the shadows that danced on the turrets, and tree
That shoots from the wall, seemed thralled spirits set free.

The wind tuned its voice to the dulcet sound
Of the spirit that harped on the waters below;
And the tree's fallen foliage that fluttered around,
Seemed unwilling to rest in the life-breathing glow:
Shapes of beauty or phantasy forming the while,
The blue smoke, slow-moving, wreathed round the dark pile.

But sight so fair the feeling soul
May idolize—oh! ne'er pourtray!
Who, by contemplating, e'er stole
The sun-bow hues from heaven away?
We look, and love, and long, though vain,
To breathe it in poetic strain.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE HOUSE WHERE PROFESSOR WILSON WAS BORN.

Is this thy birth-place, Wilson! thou, so long
The patron, shield, and soul of modern song?
Is this the spot of thy youth's bright career—
The monument for nations to revere?
Is this the scene where Nature's nursing arm
Reared thy young genius, soon a world to charm?—
How glows the heart to pour her feelings forth,
In these dear halls that gave the mighty birth!

Flower of my heart! fair fabric though thou art,
(For, whilst I gaze, methinks I'd ne'er depart!)
Thine are not charms to catch the vacant stare,
Or eye that beams infected by false glare;
Not so august, but lordling's gorgeous tower
Can thee outrival,—yet thou hast a dower,
Sweet pile! to eye of bard more fair unfurled,
Than all the proudest domes of all the world!

O, Wilson! dear to every muse, and dear
To all their vot'ries—loved with love sincere!
Thine are the laurels that, amid the blast
Of envy, ages, shall unblighted last:
Oh! not till Time—till Nature's self decay,
Shall one charm perish of thy minstrelsy!

As gentlest breeze, at twilight's dreamy hours,
Comes laden from a bank of summer flowers,—
As moonlight streaming from a cloudless heaven,
To ocean's blue wave and the mountains given,—

Till death seems past, and spiritual life begun,
The moon, the sea, and mountains blent in one,—
So dost thou seize our spirits, till we seem
The happy beings of a blissful dream,
'Mongst sights and shapes of beauty, which we may
All idolize, but never can pourtray.

In thy own native land, shall wits unborn
Follow thy feeling and frequent thy urn,
And gather o'er thy canonized shrine
Bright inspiration—energy divine,—
And here, like me, all adoration, rove,
Bound by eternal gratitude and love!

TO A WITHERED ROSE,

IN THE ALBUM OF MISS R—— OF LAUCHOPE.

The rose is lovely in the bud,
And beauteous when 'tis blown;
But, Helen, thou hast given it charms,
Even when its leaves are strown.

These secret charms around it play,
Its hidden sweets unfurled:
So virtue blooms when life decays,—
The beauty of the world!

ON A HAWTHORN.

WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

Of all the scents that load the air
In Summer's pride, the hawthorn, fair,
Sheds forth the richest redolence,
So sweet to sense—so fair to sight—
The very spirit of delight
Is in its breath, and in its glance.

It yields more fragrance forth than all
The flowers of Spring combined—which pall
Full oft by being pressed too close:
The hawthorn, without pressing, gives
To earth—to every thing that lives—
Its bounties all the world across.

We cease to prize what we possess;
But, does it make the blessing less?
Ah no! and thou fair flow'ring thorn!
Pourtrayed by Catherine, art more dear
Than plants which statelier may appear,
And rear their heads of thee in scorn.

LINES COMPOSED ON VISITING

A SCENE IN PEEBLESHIRE, WHERE A CHURCH-YARD HAD BEEN CONVERTED INTO A PLEASURE GROUND.

Blessed scene! what forms of rapture crowd
  Upon me while thy charms I trace!
Thou look'st as thou did weave War's shroud,
  So peaceful—calm thy every grace:
A pleasure-ground! and yet we tread
Above the ashes of the dead!

Thou quell'st, to contemplation meek,
  Pride, arrogance, howe'er unfurled,—
Sweet home of heaven-born thoughts, that seek
  Seclusion from the jarring world!
Possessing all the heart could guess
Of Nature's primal loveliness.

Oh! give me back that scene divine,
  Of winding walks and sculptured stones,
Flowers, shrubs, and shrub-girt streams that shine
  'Mongst sepulchres of mouldering bones!—
A scene from which wild mirth must fly,
And all unholy feelings die!

ADAM'S ADDRESS TO THE NIGHTINGALE AFTER THE FALL.

Ah, Philomel! flyest thou, too?—oh, curse indeed!
Beyond what I can bear—beyond whate'er
My offspring will: like me they ne'er can know
What this lone desert is, to Eden lost!
Yet seemed my fate less bitter, when of thee
I thought, delightful songster! that didst thrill
Our hearts to transport in our happy state,—
That haply might'st attend us still, to cheer
Our pilgrimage of sorrow! Thou art perched
On the tree's topmost bough, and hid'st thyself
Amid its foliage, as if even a look
Would instantly destroy thee!—yet thy song
Is changed to pity; sad thy softening flow:
Not thus when forth I roamed, in league with all below!

EPITAPH ON WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.

If genius powerful—piety sincere,
That warred with vice, despite the scoffer's sneer;—
If purity of heart and life, combined
With warm benevolence to all mankind,
The tear of feeling and affection crave,
Here pay the tribute—this is Cowper's grave!

TO THE STREET REMARKERS.

[The following splenetic effusion was written on the Author's return to Galston, after the publication of his first Edition. His success—strange to say—created an envious feeling towards him on the part of many of those who used to be his companions; and who, now that he had been elevated on the shoulders of popularity, and was, in consequence, a little more sparing of his conversation than he was wont to be, took every means to annoy and insult him. John gave vent to his spleen in the annexed lines, which have undergone a slight alteration, in order the better to adapt them to the public taste.]

Ye street-remarking, boolhorned bitches!
Ye idle, lazy, menseless wretches!
I'd sooner meet a group o' witches
On Hallowe'en,
Than come within your cursed clutches,
Whar ye convene.

Ye hae nae sense,—ye've nane ava,—
Low, byre-bred haverils, ane and a'!
Ye gape and glower, wi' loud guffa,
At a' that passes,
An' cock your crests, an' crously craw,
Though nocht but asses.

Ye stan' upon the street and smoke,
An' laugh an' jeer at honest folk,
An' drive, an' ane anither knock,
Like mob a-skailin';
I'd sooner far hear puddocks croak,
Or grumphy yellin'!

Hae ye nae dub at your ain door ?
Ye idle, blethering, senseless core !
That ye maun jibe, an' rowt, an' roar,
Till your sides split,
Each telling loud his pig-sty splore
Of paltry wit.

Can ye no' read ?—can ye no' write ?
Can ye no' think ae thocht that's bright ?—
Can ye no' nurse some fond delight,
Aback frae ither ?
An' no' be nuisances outright—
Deils a' thegither !

I winna say your heads are boss ;
They're filled wi' something—gowd or dross ;
Let him wha doubts it keek mair close :
An' see the byke !
Laying their lazy limbs across
The priest's glebe dyke.

Just note the marrow o' their mirth,—
Ye'll swear that an Egyptian dearth
O' common sense out-ower the earth
It's black wing stretches,
An' pray for strength, an' a horse-girth,
To skelp the wretches !

I needna preach !—sic doctrine's stale,—
To you at least of no avail ;
Ane better wad wi' brutes prevail—
Even Hielan' donkeys :
I tell you, ye but want the tail
To mak you monkeys !

THE CLOUDS OF THE WEST.

The clouds of the west! the clouds of the west!
Are lovely to see in an April morn,
When Nature rises from slumber, undrest,
In her slender night-robe of flow'rets, worn
By the buffet of breezes, yet winter-born,—
When the weird shapes of heaven, leaping down to kiss earth,
Chase winter away in their gladsome mirth.

The clouds of the west! the clouds of the west!
Stretched o'er the blue hills in a summer's moon,
That skim o'er heaven's bosom—a sunbeam their guest,
All enamoured, bestowing its magical boon
Of hues that seem deathless, yet vanishing soon,—
Forms that leap into beauty, still changing serene,
Is a sight of rapture I have seen.

The clouds of the west! the clouds of the west!
In the fairy hues of an autumn eve,
When the tired sun sinks to his golden rest,
And the lingering tints of the sky seem to grieve
That sight so lovely should ever leave
This beautiful world: where sorrow hath been,
Is throned enchantment's divinest scene!

The clouds of the west! the clouds of the west!
Abrupt and sublime, in winter's sadness,
When the fierce winds hurl them o'er the dark breast
Of the mountain bleak, in their stormy gladness;—
When the elements all are writhed to madness,
And the smile is brushed from the sun's bright mien,
Is a sight surpassing all, I ween.

LINES WRITTEN AFTER VISITING CORRA LINN BY MOONLIGHT.

The star of eve! the star of eve!
Hangs flickering o'er the ruffled stream,
Where Corra's misty waters weave
Their wild enchantment!—the gray gleam
Of downward billows dashed to ruin—
The cliffs that blighted spirits seem,
To towering bosoms well may teem
With transport, yet must be the undoing
Of him that's fitted but for homely wooing.

It thunders down! the frantic mass
Of fallen greatness sweeps below;
It thunders down! what mightiness!
The cliffs affrighted seem to bow
Beneath the salutation dire,
As 'twere of giant, whose caress
Could strangle Nature!—for no less
Than such can rouse his dreadful ire;—
How scornfully he bounds, and strikes his deafening lyre.

LINES ON PRAYER.

There's a glow of pleasure in heartfelt prayer,
That they who have tasted can ne'er forego;
It yields fresh bloom for the blight of care,
A downy couch for the breast of woe!

If heavy, heavy affliction's rod
  Hath bowed thee to earth in black despair,
Come to thy Father, thy King and God!
  Oh! come to the mercy-seat in prayer!

Who sing sad songs, with a widowed heart,
  All wearily to the desert air,
Why will ye not with your sorrows part,
  In the healing balm of heart-breathed prayer?

There's a glow of pleasure in heartfelt prayer,
  That they who have tasted can ne'er forego;
It yields fresh bloom for the blight of care,
  A downy couch for the breast of woe!

EXTEMPORE LINES,

COMPOSED ON READING CAMPBELL'S "PLEASURES OF HOPE."

Tom Campbell! we part!
  But the memory of thee
Is lodged in my heart,
  As a gem in the sea.

Oh! who would not roam
  In thy heaven-beaming ray,
Through that Eden, whose beauty
  Shall never decay?

Fairy-land, but not phantoms,
  Are hovering there :—
Realities lovely,
  As fiction most fair !

Tom Campbell ! I'll love thee
  Till life's latest breath ;
Nor fear, if I see thee,
  Hope's semblance, in death !

SONNET,

ON SEEING A WEDDED PAIR FONDLING THEIR FIRST-BORN.

Oh ! conjugal affection ! heavenly fond !—
Divided love, how high, how far beyond !—
Thou drink'st the pleasure, leav'st behind the pain
To those unbound by Hymeneal chain :
No doubt, no fear awaked by rival's eye,
No dread of parting, clouds thy halcyon sky.
What so endearing as the tender look,
When to her arms love's pleasing boon she took !
What music so enchanting as the kiss
Pressed on the pledge of soul-subduing bliss.
The life of wedded love ! withheld, how soon
The bright blaze fades—fleets passion's cloudless noon !
Then, grant me, Heaven, a consort fair and free,
With portraitures of both, to dandle amorously !

A FRAGMENT.

I PRAY not for a laurelled name;
I court not fortune, fickle dame!
My only wish, my dearest aim,
Is to be free,
An', night about, ilk town my hame,
Through Christendie!

No' pent up aye in ae dull place,—
Scenes trod on youth still to retrace—
Warm glowing manhood's cheery days
In grief to spen',
An' see nae form, an' see nae face
But what I ken.

I'd sooner countless dangers brave—
Be toiled an' tossed on every wave—
Than be a fettered, parish slave,
An' therein die,
An' ken the man, shall dig my grave,
An' whar I'll lie!

* * * *

SONNET.

DELUSIVE woman! though full oft I've felt
All thy attractions, in my breast there dwelt
A power more potent, fancy to control—
That checked the sudden sallies of the soul,—

Quenched its first kindlings in the gush of woe—
The tears of millions made by thee to flow
O'er every part of habitable earth,
Down through all ages since creation's birth;
Yet thus far nature bears upon my heart—
I may not, cannot love, yet cannot part:
Thus dread thy ties, thus strong thy stable power,
Thus deep the clouds that, spurning reason, lour:
Of thousands thou hast been the sole undoin'—
Yet what were man without thee, lovely ruin!

LINES WRITTEN IN A WILD SECLUSION OF NATURE.

Enchantment, of sedate and winning mien,
Seems the pervading spirit of this scene,
Presiding bright o'er all with sway unmarr'd,
Ere foot of man was printed on its sward;
When bees, and birds, and streams, and foliage sear,
Alone sung homage in her heavenly ear;
And flow'rets only raised their little heads
In gratulation, from their perfumed beds.
Here the wild pear and apple bloom around,
Like a neglected Eden,—and the sound
And sight of streams, that careless bubble by,
Glittering with gems, arrest both ear and eye.
Bless'd scene! thou yet art sacred, and shalt be,
To Song, and Love—the god of Poesy,
While cliffy grandeur sheds his heavenly glow,
Or beauty lingers in the vales below!

LINES TO A PEBBLE,

FOUND ON THE GRAVE OF WILLIAM BURNS, FATHER OF "THE AYRSHIRE POET."

Long 'neath the green sod, thou bright-eyed gem!
Thou'st shone, by no rude hand arrested:
Long hast thou lain o'er the ashes of him,
The Sire of the Bard, unmolested.

And thou, in thy noontide beauty, art still
Like an angel's eye-ball gleaming,
As o'er thy cheek, in a tiny rill,
The dews of heaven are streaming.

A tear-drop moistened thy lovely die,
While feelingly I hung o'er thee,—
And another stole down, as I thought that the eye
Of the *Bard* may've bedewed thee before me.

Thou lookest as thou thyself did heave
With a tide of heavenly feeling,—
So soft, so tender, as sad to leave
Thy holy and long-hallowed dwelling.

LINES TO A CANDLE,

ON WHICH THE NAME OF A YOUNG LADY WAS WRITTEN.

Go, glimmering rushlight! shed thy lonely ray
In my love's bower, amid departing day,
That she may mark the mighty spell decline,—
As sinks love's setting beam, pourtrayed by thine;

That she may know manhood's high pride hath quelled
That power which youth in hopeless thraldom held!
As fades away each letter one by one,
Like little stars that melt into the sun;—
Like foot-prints worn from snow by slow degrees,
Dissolving only in the softened breeze;—
So love's deep traces fail, as if the heart
No more might suffer, yet would break to part!
Now 'tis evanished,—not one vestige seen
Tells where the broken wizardry has been;
And thou of light shall be bereft anon,
As closes gathering night o'er hope and love o'erthrown!

LINES

ON SEEING A LOCK OF THE HAIR OF "HIGHLAND MARY."

Key of Remembrance! ringlet of the heart!
In mine thou'rt treasured, never to depart.
Thou bring'st to view the maze, with all its turns—
The shade and sunshine in the lot of Burns:
Of hue immortal, blightless as the maid,
That once thou didst adorn, delightful braid!
Oft hast thou shaded the Bard's burning cheek,
When all the world of love he could not speak
Rushed in one fervent sigh; for either heart
Intensely throbbed—too warm to meet or part.
Thou speak'st of love more strong than aught below!
Thou tell'st a tale of song-born bliss and woe!

Though, ere I saw or pressed thee, oft and long
I've wept o'er the sweet Minstrel's sweetest song.
Oh! not till Time himself with age grow gray,
Shall be forgotten that soul-melting lay,
"Sweet Highland Mary!" and thou, lovely gem!
Hang'st o'er it like a witch-wove diadem:
And still thy glossy hue the soul shall steep
In love, and cause even Envy's self to weep!

LINES COMPOSED OVER ROBERT FERGUSSON'S GRAVE.

Bright was thy short career, ill-fated Bard!
Too bright to last. Martyr of Song! to me
Dear for thy woes, thy comeliness was marr'd
In the worst blight of bitter penury:
And cold neglect came heavily o'er thee,
Shrouding thy soul in frenzy's darkest gloom!
Shamed be thy leaden townsmen, that could see
Such beauty die, and not revoke the doom!—
They brought thee, Child of Song! to this untimely tomb.

Thus bending o'er thee, not Fate's sternest frown,
Nor Fortune's smile, could grieve or gladden me!
Thus bending o'er thee, I could lay me down,
And weep my soul away, and sleep with thee!
There hovers round a spell—a witchery,
That, more than loveliest scene or loftiest song,
Dissolves the heart to tearful ecstacy
And pleasing sadness!—Poetry more strong
Flows o'er thee dead than could to living Bard belong!

EPITAPH

ON THE LATE WILLIAM TENNANT, PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS, AND AUTHOR OF "ANSTER FAIR."

If worth—if genius of the highest grade,
In unassumed humility arrayed;
If learning brilliant, but without pretence;
If song illumed with wit, and soul, and sense,
Have claims upon the world, let Tennant's name
Be held the dearest in the book of Fame.

TO KYLE.

Dark wooded, hilly, streamy Kyle,
Thou gem-spot of the Northern Isle,
Whose uplands cleave a gorgeous sky—
Where all thy stores, Enchantment! lie;
Whose vallies meet a peerless main,
Far fringed with brown by winter's rain.

Spots on thy varied bosom lie,
That with the Trossachs' grandeur vie:
Scenes that if not unrivalled, wake
Remembrances of Southern lake;
E'en Wordsworth might his wild harp tune,
Upon the shores of sweet Loch Doon.

Here Bards with Nature pastime make,
And numbers all immortal wake,
So that no brook may pass along,
Nor hillock rise, but hath its song;
Nor field, wood, copse, nor crag is seen,
Where inspiration hath not been.

Kyle! all o'ermantled with sweet song,
I love thee—I have loved thee long:
In childhood my whole heart was thine,
And manhood made thee more divine;
When, sacred thou to passion's flame,
A portion of that love became.

Like rose-tree leaning o'er the brook,
That sips its wave with freshened look,
I bend me o'er my natal home,
Extracting endless sweets therefrom—
And have nor wish, nor heart to stray
From thee—from loves that mock decay.

I love the hallowed vales to tread
Where Wallace was a patriot bred:
Where all the landscapes in their turns
Have echoed to the lyre of Burns:
Where Beauty sheds her artless smile
Among the heathy hills of Kyle.

Though we awhile have parted been
My fairy Kyle—enchanting scene!
Yet all the charms, so rich and rare,
Of earth and sea, and welkin fair,
Were held within my grasp in vain,
If proffered for my native plain.

EMILIE.

O dear, dear, is the tender joy
That love, the arching bright haired boy
Leaves—of his darts the token;
Till pangs of jealousy annoy
The blissful visions to destroy,
That else had ne'er been broken.

I loved the blooming Emilie,
And thought no one so fair as she—
The golden dawn excelling;
Her eye was bright, her forehead high,
And snowy as a summer sky,
With blue streaks o'er it swelling.

At church, her blushes made me fain,
And rose to memory oft again,
In fancy's ray unbroken;
She seemed familiar to my soul,
As breeze is to the billow's roll—
Though word we ne'er had spoken.

Were but her form at distance seen,
Her name rehearsed in praise or spleen,
'Twas finding hidden treasure:
At church, when seated by her side,
High heaved my bosom with a tide
Of palpitating pleasure.

One sweet short summer, night and day,
Passed o'er me in this winning way—
In silent, soul-fraught wooing;
Till one sad hour her eye glowed fain—
Beamed amorous on another swain—
Which wrought my love's undoing.

The counter charm, not to depart,
Came coldly o'er my freezing heart;
I felt as one awaking
From soundest sleep that has no dream;
Nor on me did past fancies teem,
To stop the spell from breaking.

We met again—we spoke at last—
As there had been to us no past;
No look betrayed a feeling
Of love still lingering, or renewed.
I laughed in heart I ever could
Have nursed a flame so stealing.

ELIZA.

Eliza! Eliza,
Oh! can it ever be,
That all the vows between us passed
Dissolve in treacherie,
The burn, the brae, the beechen tree,
The leafy woodland grot,
Were ever—oh! ever!
Too dear to be forgot.

Eliza! Eliza,
I would this stormy sea
Had been an unknown element
For evermore to me;
And that my bark had been the bower
Beside the beechen tree;
My ocean, the burnie,
That rins into the Dee.

Eliza! Eliza,
'Tis sweet to see the morn
Rise where no mountain intervenes,
In brilliancy unshorn:
Sae mayst thou hail thy love's return
Ascending from the main;
We never—oh! never,
Shall parted be again.

STANZAS

COMPOSED ON THE DEPARTURE OF A YOUNG MAN, A NATIVE OF AYR, FOR CALCUTTA.

Sweet Competence! how fair thou art!
  Choice pursuit 'mid the schemes of man!
Who, having thee, would think to part
  From friends and home? Mysterious plan
Of nature! that oft seems to thwart
  The industrious, striving all they can
To win thy dear embrace; nor scope
For heavenward deeds blends with thy hope.

And thousands, to obtain thy smile,
  Have been self-exiled, wand'ring, drear,
Through the far world from isle to isle,—
  No prospect of thy presence near:
Is such the fate decreed to wile
  Far hence our friend and brother dear?
Thou that seem'st formed to be the mate
Of enterprise, benignly great!

Thou'rt purified, in high degree,
  From passions that corrupt the heart—
Youth of the modest mien! o'er thee
  May evil ne'er its power exert—
Thou soul of sweet urbanity!
  Dear STEWART! wilt thou then depart?
Or has an idle, groundless fear,
Been whispered in our dreaming ear?

Ah me! for those that parted be,
Souls blent in aspirations dear!
Alas for the reality
That throws gloom o'er whatever sphere
The dye is cast! And we must dree
Sad separation's softening tear!
Young STEWART leaves affection's smiles,
To revel 'mongst the Indian isles.

Adventurous youth! thy generous mind,
To friendship, love, and feeling true,
In retrospective thoughts will find
Impressions sweet in memory's view.
Will change of scene thy senses blind
To beauty, in her loveliest hue?
By woody Doon, and winding Ayr—
Ah, no! thy heart shall still be there.

Kyle! land of genius—home of song!
Its waters, sweet, with lulling chime—
Thou'lt think of much, and think of long,
To cheat, perchance, the lingering time.
Thy Kyle! though featured stern and strong,
Is rich, romantic, and sublime;
Its rugged cliffs—in grandeur wild—
'Graves on the memory of its child,

Associations that defy
Time's destiny, and close him round;
Which only with his being die,
And beautiful in death is found;

The bold thoughts, bounding burning high,
That glanced on earth's remotest bound—
And through all time—all nature flowing,
The while the heart was green and glowing.

Thy early loves shall dwell with thee,
Deep in thy bosom canonized—
Their memories brightening—ever be
Beyond all coming blessings prized ;
The lip, by whose sweet melody
The heart was cunningly enticed—
The blush, the smile, the witching gleams
Of love, will gild thy eastern dreams.

New scenes and faces may create
Fresh fancies, and thy bosom burn
With something of the past, elate,
As if the past could still return.
But all that's beautiful, or great,
Of brighter climes, can ne'er o'erturn
The passion for our early home,
Howe'er we thrive, where'er we roam.

Farewell, adventurer ! yet again,
The vessel flaps its daring wing
To bear thee proudly o'er the main,
Far from the Ayr's sweet murmuring ;
I will not give thee needless pain,
Nor gloom athwart thy bosom fling—
Be every bliss thy boon, the while
Thou'rt absent from thy native Isle.

Afar on India's coral strand,
  Thou'lt breathe thy wishes o'er the deep,
And think upon the happy land
  That gave thee birth, and still will keep
Thy memory in the brother band
  Ye left behind, your loss to weep,
Who will not cease the hopeful prayer
For thy return—thy welfare there.

TO COILA.

Coila! thou nurse of the mighty, stern-beaming!
  On, in thy pride, like a wild swelling wave;
Hie to the hill where the broad-swords are gleaming—
  The blent life-blood streaming of freeman and slave!
    Clydesdale has crossed the heath,
    Avondale, out of breath,
Has girt on her armour and hied her away;
    Cunninghame's banners wave,
    Galloway wields the glaive,
Panting with Wallace to join in the fray.

Thou art up—thou art gone, like the roe of the mountain!
  Woe, woe to the files of yon bright battle wold
That thine arm hath encountered, high heaving the fountain
  Of blood down the heathy declivity rolled!
    O'er the dread spangled fray,
    Freedom, that mangled lay,
Lifts her sunk eye like a star of the night,—
    Re-sinews the hoary,
    Fires youth with fresh glory,
Enthroned on thy scimitar, Wallace the wight!

THE WIND.

How dreary, seated all alone,
To list the breeze, in lonely bield,
Rushing, with melancholy moan,
Through chinks that forced admittance yield:
In panic haste it seems to blow
A moment, then is hushed—and then
Sigh after sigh, in fitful flow,
Strike mournful on the ear again.

It sounds again, with sadder swell,
Like to distraction's doleful cry
O'er unexpected griefs, that thrill
The very soul of agony:
To me it sings the varied lay
Of sorrow—since the world began—
As all the tones of misery
Were wildly mingled into one.

Though I were in my lightest mood,
And chanted e'er so blythe a strain—
And thought the world all pure and good—
And love had ne'er been sold for gain—
One burst of this bewailing wind
Would sink me in despondency,
And I would then no comfort find—
Though all around were mirth and glee.

THE BEREAVED MAIDEN.

A FAIR maid wandered through the glen,
And seated herself by the birchen tree;
'Twas the trysting spot, by a fairy grot
Of wild flowers and sweet shrubbery.

Lonely she paced the woodland path,
Till the hour of meeting long had past,—
Till the parting hour chimed from the grey tower,
As she ventured to the spot at last.

She looked, she listened,—nought met her eye,
Save the bark that skimmed o'er the deep blue sea;—
Oh! never again shall her faithful swain
Meet her in the bower by the birchen tree.

Borne from his love by a ruthless band,
He sweeps o'er the wild wave to fight the proud foe;—
Torn from the bower at the trysting hour,
Gathering the wild flowers her path to strew.

She rose, she rushed adown the vale
To the wild wood side, where a wizard stream
Leaped down the steep, with fitful sweep,
Then stole soft away like a dying dream.

She dropped her down 'neath an aspen bough,
That canopied a lonely brake,
Like a floweret gem torn from its stem,
No coming spring might e'er awake.

Her flowing hair, like flakes of gold,
Lay fluttering o'er her heaving heart;
And her pallid eye looked, as 'twere, on high—
Then lost its aim like an erring dart.

No sigh she heaved—she seemed as one
Whose peace was broken, and knew not why;
Like a dark storm hushed, no tear-drop gushed,—
Oh! she had wept their channels dry!

MARY O' STANLEY GLEN.

My Mary's the pride o' Stanley Glen,
Afar by yon sunny sea;
The bonniest flower in fair Scotlan'
Less comely is than she:
Her form is handsome, her face is meek,
Her teeth are the ivorie;
And her fair hair in swirls hangs o'er her cheek
Like mist on the sun's e'ebree.

Oh! sweet to hear are the sky-lark's strains,
When it leaves the dull earth, to skim,
So merrily to aërial plains,
Through the cloud and the rainbow's rim;

And dear to see are the gaudy dies
O' yon wastlin sky at even—
Whar high, and higher, the green hills rise,
Like steps on the stair o' heaven.

But all the raptures this bosom e'er felt,
Are summed up, my Mary, in thee—
When her Houri's hame the spirit hath built,
Wi' the beams of Poesy !
For thine is the look and the lovely air,
To the Bard in vision given ;
But thy hinnied lips an' thy smile ensnare,
Like a mesh let down frae heaven !

Its lang since we parted, my Mary, dear !
By the burn whar the birches twine ;
An' mony a time has the scorchin' tear
Ran down my cheek sinsyne ;
For Hope's sweet flowers nae fruitage brought,
An' sair did we repine—
But now the weary battle's fought ;
An' thou'rt for ever mine !

TO MARY.

Were all those realms e'er fancy traced,
  Where summer loves to linger, mine,—
With every gem that ever graced
  Proud royalty,—that wealth were thine.
The noblest of thy sex above
  Thou 'dst be, fair maid, my peerless queen!
But, ah! I may not think of love—
  Too wide a barrier lies between.

Wert lower thou in life's ascent,
  Or what I might have been were I,
This bosom were not wrung nor rent
  With pining—hopeless agony.
The rapture rolling from thine eye,
  The lurking graces of thy mien,
My soul's idolatry shall be,
  Whate'er between us intervene.

As rolls o'er steep the torrent strong,
  Winged with lightning, dashed to spray,
So leaped life's bounding pulse along,
  'Mid the delights of one blessed day!
Oh! doubly hallowed may it be,
  Revered for aye the sacred scene,
Where look met love, and side by side,
  As what had ne'er divided been.

M

THE JOYS OF LOVE.

By the dark mossy rill, on a flower-bank reclining,
Alone by yon shaw, in its dew-moisten'd shade,
Where woodbine and wild flowers were am'rously twining
Round the hawthorn and hazel that grew in the glade ;
There spied I a fair maid, all thoughtfully humming
A wild mournful ditty of passion and pain ;
And I felt my heart thrill with emotions—that woman
Had ne'er waked before, nor can e'er wake again !

The woodlands were mute—not a zephyr's commotion
Amongst the green leaves, as I listened her lay !
Hushed Nature seemed wrapt in unbreathing devotion,
Amidst the rich hues of her summer array !
Deep blushed the maid through her light silken tresses,
That hung o'er a cheek of so tender a hue,
As fitted alone for some mortal's caresses
Whose bosom ne'er cherished a thought to undo.

I pressed her as gently's the sunbeam that kisses
The tear-drop of morn from the flower in the vale ;
And I thought of the witch'ry that beauty possesses
When sweetened by virtue—what graces prevail !
Oh, ne'er mair again will I wander despairing,
At morning or e'en on thy banks, sweet Burnawn !
And never again shall false hope re-appearing,
Cloud life's laughing noontide—love's glorious dawn.

It's no' in the chase after finery and fashion—
  It's no' in the beaming of fortune's bright day,
That can shield us frae sadness, or soothe us in sorrow,
  Or strew flowers of paradise over our way.
Awa wi' ambition, it yields nought but sorrow,—
  Awa wi' the world, my treasure shall be
To live on thy smiling, sae sweetly beguiling,
  While wandering at e'ening, my Mary, wi' thee!

SONGS.

SONGS.

ANACREONTIC SONG.

Kiss the goblet, and live! it is sweeter to sip,
And richer than Beauty's ambrosial lip,
And fairer than fairyland poets have sung,
And truer than Flattery's mellifluous tongue!
When clouds o'er the bright sky of young hope are driven,
Fill the bowl! fill it high!—it will waft you to heaven!

When Penury shoots his sharp frosts through the blood,
Or Passion would weave us too early a shroud,—
When Conscience starts up like a sibilant snake,
And the glory sets darkly that shone to awake—
A fire and a feeling which held us in thrall,—
Fill the bowl! fill it high!—'tis the Lethe of all!

When Obloquy pours forth her poisonous breath,
And saddens our sky with the paleness of death,—
When Friendship's sweet smile is converted for aye
To the frown of contempt and the glance of dismay;
Though these evils above us like thunder-clouds hang,
Fill the bowl! fill it high!—it will soften the pang.

What is life but the sound of a wearisome chime?
What is love but a tree in the desert of time,
Whose blossoms look pale in the watery glow
That flickering gleams on its branches of woe—
Those branches whose leaves are so pallid and few?
Fill the bowl! fill it high!—'twill their verdure renew.

When manhood declines, and the gray hairs of age
Come to tell that we tread on life's last leaden stage,—
When the lights of the heart all in darkness subside,
And the slow hours, like reptiles, through charnel-vaults glide,—
When death's shadow rests on the spiritless frame,—
Fill the bowl! fill it high!—'twill rekindle the flame.

THE HOME OF CONTENTMENT.

From the home of contentment, the bosom of pleasure,
Far, far on the proud waves of glory I rode;
I joyed in my heart o'er each hope and each treasure,
Nor deemed idol self was a suffering god;
But dark clouds all slowly came gathering o'er me,
That dimmed the sweet sunshine I bask'd in behind,
And the billows rose higher and higher before me,
Where, a-making Hope's grave, howled the hurricane wind.

To seek the sweet primal delights I'd forsaken,
From spot to spot wandered I, weary and long,—
The glare of the world no joy could awaken.
Nor the scenes of mad folly inspirit my song:
Now, at last, in this sweet little village reposing,
From sorrow and sighing I soon found release,
And I'll hallow for ever, Heaven's kind interposing,
That led me to seek this asylum of peace.

THE MAIDEN FAIR.

The moon hung o'er the gay green-wood,
The green-wood o'er the mossy stream,
That rolled in rapture's wildest mood,
And fluttered in the fairy beam;
Through light clouds flashed the fitful gleam
O'er hill and dell,—all nature lay
Wrapped in enchantment, like the dream
Of her that charmed my homeward way!

Long had I marked thee, maiden fair!
And drunk of bliss from thy dark eye,
And still, to feed my fond despair,
Blessed thy approach,—and, passing by,
I turned me round to gaze and sigh,
In worship wild, and wished thee mine,
On that fair breast to live and die,
O'erpowered with transport so divine!

Still sacred be that hour to love,
And dear the season of its birth,
And fair the glade, and green the grove,—
Its bowers ne'er droop in wintry dearth
Of melody and woodland mirth!—
The hour, the spot, so dear to me!
That weaned my soul from all on earth,
To be for ever blessed in thee.

THE PARTED.

Though years of solitude and care,
Since last we met, have rolled away,
Still beams thine image on my soul,
As our farewell had been to-day;
Though much my eyes have since beheld
Of beauty, kindling love in all,
This bosom was already fired,—
To know, to brook no other's thrall.

Transplanted, as thou art, from all
Held sacred by thy youthful heart,
Say, are thy dearest thoughts of him,
Whose all of love and life thou art?
Oh! shall we never meet again,
Sweet Irvine! on thy banks at eve,
When flits the moon o'er the heathy hill,
And the while mists thicken o'er the wave!

I LOVE THEE, SWEET MAIDEN.

I LOVE thee, sweet maiden! though all my wealth
Is a true heart and fond, fond fancy;
But swayed I as the Eastern youth,
A world would I gi'e for my Nancy!
A world would I gi'e for my Nancy!

Thou art young, and stately, and mild, my love,
As the star on the still lake sleeping;
Oh! thou hast in that angel form
Every winning grace a-keeping,
Every winning grace a-keeping.

How charming to look on a lovely scene,
When the moon softly o'er it is streaming,—
When all is like an enchanting dream,
Of spirit's beautiful framing,
Of spirit's beautiful framing.

But all the enchantments of nature combined,
Though dear, dear to this bosom,
Are nought to the visions of bliss I enjoyed
In thy presence, thou tender sweet blossom!
In thy presence, thou tender sweet blossom!

When playing with thy fair flaxen hair,
What thrillings of rapture came o'er me!
How fondly and warmly I wished thee mine,
That I might ever adore thee!
That I might ever adore thee!

But, it may be, my fate is unlovely and dark,
And will sever me far frae my Nancy;
Yet I'll ne'er find anither, fair, fair though they be,
Whose charms thus will fetter my fancy,
Whese charms thus will fetter my fancy.

Then Hope, sweet Hope! in my bosom bud,
Though thou should'st blossom never!
Stern winter may seize thee, ruthless and rude,
And thou, ere unfolded, shalt wither,
And thou, ere unfolded, shalt wither.

CAN'ST THOU STAY BEHIND, MARY?

Can'st thou stay behind, Mary?
Can'st thou stay behind, Mary?
The winds howl high, as they'd rend the sky—
Oh! can'st thou stay behind, Mary?

Fearfu' bodes the black'ning lift,
The burn jaws like a sea, Mary!
And wildly wings the ewdendrift
Frae yonder hill, sae hie, Mary!
Can'st thou stay, &c.

The prey-birds cower amang the cleuchs,
The storm is ill to dree, Mary;
And the tempest's eerie spirit soughs,
Through ilk lone leafless tree, Mary!
Can'st thou stay, &c.

Trust, fondest love, sweet maid, forlorn!
There's nane so dear as thee, Mary!
The rose's breath, on zephyr borne,
Was ne'er sae sweet to me, Mary!
Can'st thou stay, &c.

O WERT THOU ON SOME FOREIGN SHORE

O wert thou on some foreign shore,
Far frae the eye of any,
And were I shipwrecked on that shore,
Were't e'er sae wild and lanely,
There would I taste love's purest bliss
With thee, thou tender blossom!
There I thy nectared lips would kiss,
Reclining on thy bosom.

Sweet as the scented vernal bloom,
But doubly mair endearing,
Thyself bloom'st in thy sweeter spring,
Midst flowers and fragrance peering;
I'd scorn, though e'er so fair that flower,
That has been by another
Plucked from its stem, or pressed,—but thou
Untouched art altogether.

HERE IN THE BANKWOOD, NANCY.

[The following verses are the first effort of the Author's Muse, and were written when he was but a boy. The Nancy alluded to was the fair one whose charms kindled the first emotion of love in the Poet's breast: a slight notice regarding her will be found in the memoir prefixed to this volume.

Here in the bankwood, Nancy,
Here in the bankwood, Nancy,
I've formed a bower, from sun and shower,
To screen thee in the bankwood, Nancy.

The tree puts forth, at Nature's ca',
Its blossoms fair, and mantle blooming,
Primroses smile and daisies blaw;
The simmer, in her pride, is coming.
Here in the bankwood, &c.

Adown by Cessnock's woody braes,
Where flowers the thorn and wilding cherry,
In autumn there we'll pu' the slaes,
And, far'er down, the wild rasp berry.
Here in the bankwood, &c.

Alang the hazle-covered hill,
With thee I'd roam, and never weary:
Beside the clear romantic rill,
What were my joys wi' thee, my dearie.
Here in the bankwood, &c.

I MARRIED A WIFE.

I married a wife for an easy life,
And a wise puir man, methought, was I,
She had gear at comman', and was free an' aff haun',
And had a braw steadin' o' houses forbye.

The youngsters a' lookit as they could hae bruikit
My bride, as we rade in our carriages by;
And I thocht to mysel—then just buckled to Nell—
I e'en was the happiest man 'neath the sky.

But the dawn may appear in the summer tide clear,
And glowin' wi' mony a gay gaudy dye,
Till fickle winds veer—drivin', lanely and drear,
The Borean vapour and cloud o'er the sky:

Sae turned out my kimmer the very first simmer;
She gossip'd awa' houses, siller, and kye;
And scarce had we been wed a towmont I ween,
When a luckless puir man I found was I.

She was either a-fiel', gatheriu' in a fresh store
O' clashes and tales, 'mang the neebors to tell;
Or in bed, smoor'd wi' claes, in the lang simmer days,
Riftin' hysteric win', like the steam o' a stell.

And aff for sea-jauntin' in steamers gallantin',
She left me alane in my wearisome biel,
And sported awa', whyles a week, and whyles twa,
And brought hame a budget wad bothered the deil.

She gaed up and doon stairs—wi' her outlandish airs;
She beck'd and she bow'd, and she caper'd and flang;
She storm'd and was snell—wi' a tongue like a bell,
Aye thun'rin' at me the weary nicht lang.

No' to bide 'neath the brewin' o' black hopeless ruin
I hae sought me a hame 'neath Columbian sky;
And I'll marry nae mae—though a kingdom they hae,
And a wise puir man, methinks, am I.

LOVELY JEAN.

Now winter o'er the Ochills grey,
Hath breathed his latest, lingering, sigh,
And woods revive beneath the ray
Of unsealed Nature's vernal eye;
Yet winter, in its wildest form,
Had charms this weary heart to cheer,
Were I but wandering through the storm,
To meet wi' thee, my Jeanie dear.

But storms may thunder through the woods—
Or simmer smile, and zephyrs play—
Nae hope within my bosom buds,
And nought can cheer the cheerless day.
We twa are parted—thou art gane,
And perish'd, as thou ne'er had'st been,
Whilst I maun pine and grieve alane,
For thee, my lost—my lovely Jean.

Not perils of the briny deep,
Nor change of place, nor lapse of time,
Can first love in oblivion steep,
With its impassioned scenes sublime.
The bird sings on the naked spray,
Where once its leafy nest has been;
So passion clings in life's decay,
To thy cold urn, my lovely Jean.

JAMIE AND SALLY.

" Oh! where, went my Jamie sae sad in the morning,
O'er burnie and brae—o'er the green Gallowlaw;
Oh! wae to my proud heart, and wae to my scornin',
For that was the thing drave my laddie awa.
Yestreen, at the hairst-hame, his daffin to settle,
I sported wi' ithers, but ne'er was untrue—
I thoughtna his leal heart was made o' sic mettle—
I ne'er had a wish ony ither to lo'e."

" I'm wanted amang the young chiels to be wary;
Am shy as ye like, but himsel' is na sae,
At the kirn or the clachan, wi' Jenny and Mary,
He joined in a dance—yet I'd naething to say.
Is't that my roozed charms hae tint their attraction—
Is't love that's o'er het is maist ready to cule—
That Jamie's forgettin' the dear recollection,
O' times that are past, leaves his lassie in dule."

Her Jamie—concealed in a turn o' the valley—
Stood listening to sounds so delightfully dear,
Then flew to the arms o' his ain lovely Sally,
Where again vows were plighted, of passion sincere.
Nae words were o' blame, an' nae thoughts were a-roamin',
They laughed at the little that lovers annoy,
And sat by the burn till the grey hour o' gloamin',
The wild spate of feeling subsiding in joy.

NOW SIMMER COMES IN PRIDE AGAIN.

Now simmer comes in pride again,
Sweet Mary, my love!
And early flowerets gem the plain,
Sweet Mary, my love!
On yon bloomy sylvan brae
The sheep and lambkins play,
And linnets lilt on ilka spray,
Sweet Mary, my love!

Then let soft passion's gentle thrill,
Sweet Mary, my love!
Thy young and tender bosom swell,
Sweet Mary, my love!
Life's fair, but fleeting, spring
Is up and on the wing,—
Must it but care and sorrow bring,
Sweet Mary, my love?

Though, by affection fired, thine e'e,
Sweet Mary, my love!
With all-decaying Time maun dee,
Sweet Mary, my love!
Yet while it can enchain,
Let it not roll on in vain,—
This swelling heart yet soothe again,
Sweet Mary, my love

But if sweet Hope maun be o'erthrown,
Sweet Mary, my love!
Disclose it in thy scornful frown,
Sweet Mary, my love!
Not in thy pawky smile,—
It may my woes beguile,
But make me deem the while
Thou'rt sweet Mary, my love!

FROM THE SCENES OF HER CHILDHOOD.

From the scenes of her childhood my Mary is gone—
To Scotia's bleak hills from proud England a while,
And left me far distant, to languish alone,
For her sweet beaming eye and her soft blushing smile.
The woods and the streams of our own native dell,
Where together we roamed in the moon's fairy beam,
And the broom bower of gold in the valley, may tell
Of the rapture's that plighted our loves' broken dream.

Blow soft o'er the border, ye winds of the south!
And charm for a season cold Scotia's domain;
For on Clutha's green banks, in the bloom of her youth,
My Mary strays far from her fond hearted swain.
Oh! come to that bosom whose heart is thy own,
Thou flower of the fairest, whom modesty sways!
Giving Love back his bliss, yielding Hope back her throne,
As cheery we sport on our own flowery braes!

THE OLD BLIGHTED THORN.

All night, by the pathway that crosses the moor,
I waited on Mary,—I lingered till morn,
Yet thought her not false,—she had ever been true
To her tryst by the old blighted thorn.

I had heard of Love lighting to darken the heart,
Fickle, fleeting as wind, and the dews of he morn;
Such were not my fears, though I sighed all night long,
And wept 'neath the old blighted thorn.

The snows that were deep, had awakened my dread,
I marked as foot-prints far below by the burn;
I sped to the valley,—I found her deep sunk
On her way to the old blighted thorn!

I whispered "My Mary!"—she spoke not: I caught
Her hand, pressed her pale cheek,—'twas icy and cold;
Then sunk on her bosom—its throbbings were o'er—
Nor knew how I quitted my hold.

A BONNY LASS.

A BONNY lass, I ken her face—
O gin I kent her hame—
Comes past, in all the pride and grace
That fans young passion's flame.
Plump, rosy, tight, with eye so bright,
Dark glossy, silken hair,
And smile so sweet, she's won complete,
A heart unused to care.

A heart ne'er gained before is thine,
And beats for thee alone;
I'll name thee by thy charms divine,
My beautiful unknown!
Speed fast the time when I shall know
Who is my matchless queen;
Where is her hame, and what her name—
Sweet Mary, Nell, or Jean.

Whate'er she be, of high degree,
Or but a peasant dame,
I care not—in her charms I see
What wins the soul's acclaim.
The fairest of her sex, in all
The bloom of youth arrayed,
In form and face, each winning grace
Of virtue is pourtrayed.

THE MERRY GOBLET.

The dear days o' courtship are over and gone,
And the dear days o' wedlock are fast coming on:
My Peggy and I, we lo'ed ilk ither lang,—
Then fill the merry goblet o'er the blythe bridal sang!

This warld's a faucht now,—it's no as we've seen,
But contented we'll be as contented we've been;
Frae gloomy repining sweet pleasure ne'er sprang,—
Then fill the merry goblet o'er the blythe bridal sang!

Ambition sits high on the slippery steep,
Where fools roam, her harvest of sorrow to reap;
But virtue we'll court, the green vales and woods amang—
Then fill the merry goblet o'er the blythe bridal sang!

If bairnies we hae, may ilk ane o' them appear
Wi' tochers o' virtue,—that's better far than gear!
Wi' tochers o' virtue nae gowd could ever bang,—
An' we yet may fill the goblet o'er their blythe bridal sang!

Gae dance roun' the table, gray Three-score-and-ten!
An' show to your offspring ye ance were young men;
An' you, ye gay youngsters, up to your feet bang,
And dance us Tullochgorum o'er the blythe bridal sang!

I MARKED THEE PASS, IN MAIDEN PRIDE.

I MARKED thee pass, in maiden pride,
With every rare attraction graced;
I saw thee smile, and felt the tide
Of ecstacy roll through my breast:
On thy enchanting mien I gazed,
Till bound in passion's pleasing thrall,
For thy soft looks upon my soul
Did in o'erpowering sweetness fall.

There may be some even fair as thee,
Though on these lips might seraph sigh;
But a fairer and a dearer face
Ne'er met my wild and wandering eye.
Oh! by that spreading blush, that smile,
Soft stealing o'er the seat of love,
Thy blissful image from my soul
Time never, never can remove!

FINIS.

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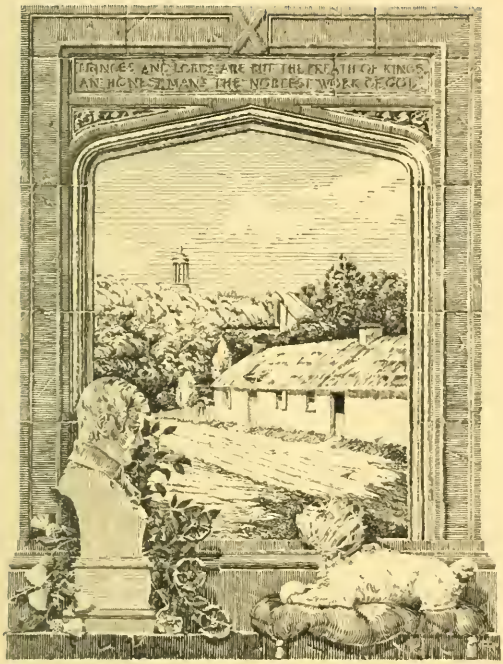

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